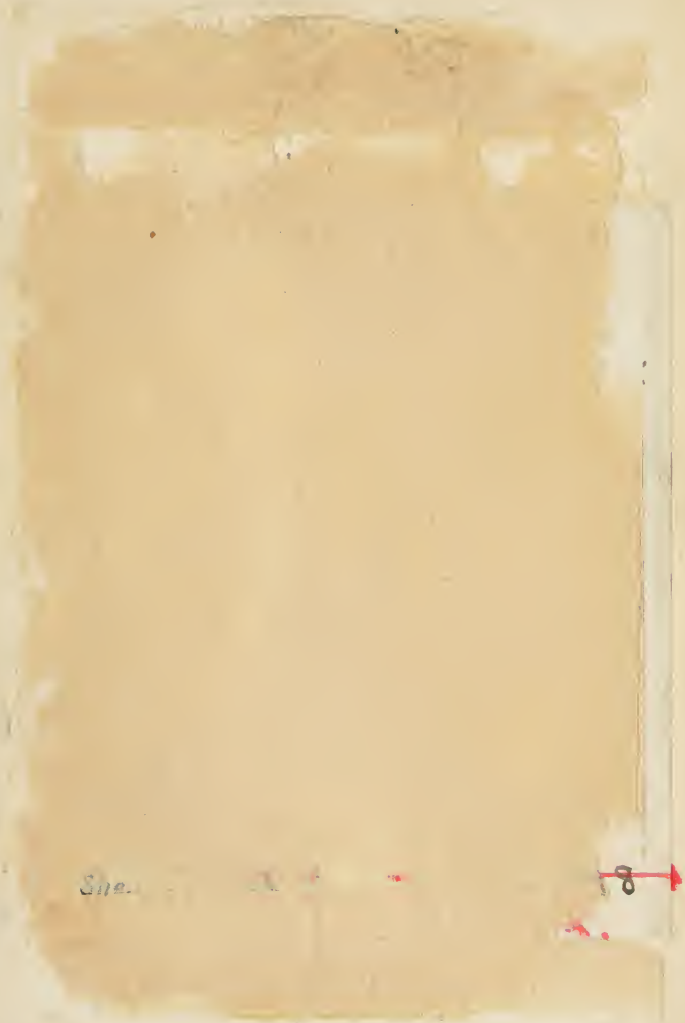
NYPL RESEARCH LIBRARIES
3 3433 07997822 1

# Wings of the Morning

Walter C. Roberts



204 R HP 14980

KEEP THIS BOOK CLEAN
DO NOT TURN DOWN THE LEAVES
owers finding this book pencil-marked,
n, mutilated or unwarrantably defaced,
l to report it to the librarian

Z1K
Roberts

# Wings of the Morning

## Essays and a Sermon for Lent and Other Seasons

BY

WALTER C. ROBERTS

RECTOR OF CHRIST CHURCH
CORNING, N. Y.

"Now from the altar of our hearts
Let flames of love arise."

14980

CENTRAL RESERVE

G. P. PUTNAM'S SONS
NEW YORK AND LONDON
The Knickerbocker Press
1901

THE NEW YORK
PUBLIC LIBRARY
164377B
ASTOR, LENOX AND
TILDEN FOUNDATIONS
R 1942 L

COPYRIGHT, 1901
BY
WALTER C. ROBERTS

The Knickerbocker Press, New York

204 R HH 14980

# PREFACE

LENT is for the depression of wrong tendencies, not right feelings.

It is a journey into the wilderness; because by that way alone can we reach the mountain top.

It is a research into the deeper principles of religion, and into the purity of our own purposes, for the sake of discovering the Christ more clearly, and manifesting Him more worthily.

If our religion takes deeper root these forty days, the plant and flower and fruit of life will attest the value of the season.

If we find ourselves able to serve Him more cheerfully and joyfully, the journey to the mountain top has not been in vain.

Let us suspect the duty that is done without a single throb of joy, and the hour of worship that is spent without a single gladdening of the spirit,—or the communion that has omitted the *Sursum Corda*.



CENTRAL RESERVE

If the thoughts herein contained shall contribute to the exaltation of religious feeling, they will have served their purpose.

# CONTENTS


| CHAPTER | | PAGE |
|---|---|---|
| I. | Wings of the Morning. . . . . | 1 |
| II. | Mountain-top Piety . . . . . | 6 |
| III. | Persistence of Vision . . . . . | 12 |
| IV. | When Easy Things Go Hard . . | 21 |
| V. | Elasticity . . . . . | 30 |
| VI. | A Sunshine Recorder . . . . . | 38 |
| VII. | An Intrepid Spirit . . . . . | 46 |
| VIII. | Unheard Melodies . . . . . | 54 |
| IX. | Lamps after Sunrise . . . . . | 60 |
| X. | Unbought Ministries . . . . . | 65 |
| XI. | The Overshot Wheel . . . . . | 70 |
| XII. | Cutting the Tendrils . . . . . | 78 |
| XIII. | I Hate to go to Church . . . . | 84 |
| XIV. | A Saint within Three Degrees . | 91 |
| XV. | Recognition. . . . . | 96 |
| XVI. | Consideration for the Strong. . | 105 |
| XVII. | Exercise . . . . . | 114 |
| XVIII. | Vital Piety . . . . . | 121 |
| XIX. | Sermon—Duty of Joy . . . . . | 127 |

# WINGS OF THE MORNING

## CHAPTER I

### WINGS OF THE MORNING

THE season of Lent is no doubt intended to act primarily upon the resolution, to bring us into better accord with known duty, and make us more sensitive to the voice of conscience, but it by no means intends to leave out an effect upon the emotions.

All the holy sentiments connected with and contributory to our faith are to be quickened and vivified, so that with better sanctification of the life shall come renewed affections.

The season will make us study more carefully and absorb more completely the heaven-taught doctrines of the Church,

and as our grasp upon them becomes firmer there will spring naturally from this state of things a new energy and uplift to our religious feelings.

The deeper down the creed goes into our acceptance, the higher does the joyous feeling rise.

Lent multiplies for us our services and communions, and in so doing emphasizes the duty of worship, but it is intended that every such use of the means of grace shall be connected with the hope of glory, and, because of this connection, send us forth with new melody in the heart, or better, with the old song sweetened and energized.

"Wings of the morning" is a phrase from the psalmist's lips, referring, no doubt, to the sunbeams, which, when they are born in the east, fly with incredible rapidity to the west, outstripping the wings of a bird or those of the wind.

But even this speed would be useless if with it we should attempt to escape the Divine Presence: "If I take the wings

of the morning and dwell in the uttermost part of the sea, surely shall Thy hand lead me." The Divine Presence is swifter than light. It is everywhere; space is powerless to divide us from that love which God vouchsafes His children through Christ.

"What shall separate us from it," said St. Paul,—"nor height, nor depth." It hath wings to follow more swiftly everywhere. It hath feet like hinds' feet to climb the perpendicular cliff, or descend into the deep abyss; it is a love so powerful as to pursue us even in our flights of mood, when in heights of joyful feeling we are in danger of presumption, forgetfulness, self-absorption,—or when in depth of despondency we confront the temptation to despair.

Now, just because it *is* everywhere, our joyful feelings should prevail, and our religion should have in it the wings of the morning — not to speed us away from God, but towards Him ; should have in it the sunbeams, that, permeated with the holy light ourselves, we may speed to the

diffusion of radiance — away from darkness, gloom, and repining, and towards the attainment of all that light stands for.

You will make no mistake if you select for yourselves a new departure this Lent, and examine yourselves daily by the Apostolic standard, "Rejoice in the Lord alway," etc. It will not slacken your penitence, nor decrease the number of your tears of sorrow for sin. It will not make you careless of your solemn obligations. It will not turn away your gaze from the fasting, suffering Christ.

But on the other hand it will make you fight more manfully against sin, the world, and the devil. It will bring into prominence the baptismal blessing that made you a child of the light, clarifying your vision of divine things. It will give you greater patience, and with it greater elasticity. It will put winsome lines into your face and enhearten your spirit.

It will teach you a melody unknown to any single soul but yours. It will make you a beacon-light in the night when

most needed. It will restrain your impetuosities, while it strengthens your hold upon things most surely believed. It will send you to the house of God with willing feet. It will harden you against passing discomforts. It will make you quick in apprehension and consideration. It will, in a word, emphasize for you the duty of joy.

## CHAPTER II

### MOUNTAIN-TOP PIETY

It was the privilege of many during the summer months to get a taste of fresh air by shore or mountain, and with it a sense of reviving in their religious life which it would be well to bring back with them and make permanent.

Removed from accustomed scenes to places where extended views and rugged headlands satisfied the eye, there came also a renewal of visions belonging to the spiritual realm, with outlines more fair and a horizon that is boundless.

Untied from ordinary burdens, the luxury of freedom brought with it an uplift of spirit, as if for awhile all the bonds and knots of care had been severed, and the chains of anxiety destroyed link by link.

New companions gave a fresh turn to thought, by means of which all human

countenances, especially the familiar ones, have emphasized in them the nobler and more winning features.

Old exasperating entanglements were left behind for a time, buried in the forgetfulness of some hours of joy, till it seemed that when we should face the mass again some gentle hand would straighten out the snarl.

How easy it was then to bring the best part of our religion to the fore; removed from the disquietude of this world, it was possible to behold the King in his beauty; no thought of murmuring crossed our mental atmosphere—no wish to be rebellious was present—no echo of the old suspicion of doubt about heavenly things was heard. Our strength was renewed, our nerves quieted, and being ready in body and soul we were able cheerfully to accomplish the duty of the hour. The confidence of childhood came back to us, the hopes of our choicest moments became a real possession, and, better than that, the early determinations and resolutions gained possession to shape our future course.

This was a taste of mountain-top piety

— the exhilaration of altitude was ours; our souls were wind-swept, our eyes were filled with tears of joy as we looked off on a world so fair that we knew it must be the workmanship of an all-loving Father. A sense of nearness to the skies came like a sweet persuasion over our souls, and it seemed the most natural and easy thing in the world for the spirit of a comforting God to come very close to us, and surround us like an atmosphere.

From the hills, heaven did not seem to be a far-off place, but a region just a step removed, and capable of being compassed with a glance of the eye.

Then, too, every mountain and hill seemed marked with the radiance of the sign of the cross, and touched with a Saviour's blessing.

Our state of mind was comparable to that of Moses when upon Mount Nebo he was bidden to look upon the land of promise. At that moment he had no wish to leave the world — his one prayer was, Let me stay and work.

Or to that of Joshua, the very courageous man, who built an altar unto the Lord God of Israel in Mount Ebal; or

to that of Elijah, who upon the top of Carmel said, "Let it be known this day that Thou art God in Israel and that I am Thy servant"; or of David, who sang, "I will lift up mine eyes unto the hills from whence cometh my help."

This mountain-top piety was a very real and most splendid thing, the very essence of what our religion might and should be all the year around.

The problem is to bring back this possession to our working days; to secure this radiance for the illumination of the darker hours; to condense this power and treasure it so as to bring it forth for use in the weaker moments; to paint the vision with such lasting colors that the picture shall never fade: to rejoice in the Lord alway.

The problem, in other words, is to create, cultivate, encourage, and maintain religious feelings, as a duty in itself, and a help to all other duties. So much has been said against religious feeling, and such a great stress laid upon principle

and duty, that people have been led to suspect an exuberant religion, and to be afraid of a Christianity that sparkles and scintillates.

They have been led to suppose that a sober, humdrum, semi-tearful adhesion to daily rule and measure was the ideal of a Christ follower.

But it is not so. Banish the malaria from your religious constitutions, and breathe into them daily a few blasts from the mountain top to bring about a marvellous change.

Lent is exactly the vacation time of the soul, in the sense of privilege, when we are to separate ourselves a little from the world, and go up into the mountain to rest awhile with our Lord.

Gaining the exaltation of high companionship and noble instruction, catching the gleam of promises bright enough to gladden the soul, it will be strange indeed if the wings of the morning do not become a reality to us, and the sunbeams of the Divine Presence a rich possession of the inner life.

Take them thankfully and use them

heartily as a means of transportation for thought to bring you constantly into the region of whatsoever is true, honest, just, pure, lovely, and of good report.

## CHAPTER III

### PERSISTENCE OF VISION

HAVING reached the mountain top and gained a view which those upon the plain can never get, or believe in, until they stand beside you, after climbing the same toilsome steps, the question now comes, —How can I keep the vision?

For if I could only keep it, the phrase "wings of the morning" would cease to be poetry and become the most glowing of facts; by this vision I mount, I fly, and with the speed of sunbeams compass greater heights, maintaining a place in that serene atmosphere of perfect freedom which is still the reward of God service.

One of the defects to which the physical eye is subject has the very suggestive name, "persistence of vision." When an object is seen and turned away from, the perfect eye draws over that impression

an instantaneous curtain, so that it vanishes utterly and makes way for the next picture.

It is of the same importance as that the memory shall not confuse the present thought with past recollections, or previous processes. The page must be clean and white if a clear record is to be made. In persistent vision the thing just seen obscures that which is now presented. In persistent audition the sound abides and mingles itself with the new sounds which are waiting for recognition, confusing the hearing.

Of all the five senses, the wonderful expansion of the optic nerve, which paints upon the retina scenes of beauty and gives facility to every action, is the most important to man's usefulness and happiness, so that sight has well been called the consummate flower of creation. It is for this reason that we shrink from any blemish in the power of seeing, and might regard the above title as far from an inviting one.

But there is another eye than the material one, with powers just as keen for a

different realm, with capacities for being trained to offices more commanding, connected with results that are eternal; and in this eye persistence of vision, so far from being a defect, is a necessity.

I refer to the eye of the mind and soul, by which we see things that are invisible to the physical organ. It is the power of insight. And poor indeed is the life bereft of it.

The blind beggar who sits by the wayside is a king compared with that man who has blindness in his heart; for to him no vision is possible, and that condition is hopeless.

All great enterprises were once visions. Strength has been re-enforced, heroism created, self-conquest achieved, and prolonged usefulness maintained through the force of that spiritual fact wrapped up in the phrase, persistence of vision.

Vision belongs to the region of mental conceptions. It is outside the bounds of natural law, it cannot be accounted for by theories of cause and effect, it can easily be banished by neglect, or pushed aside by determination, it can be eliminated from the life which insists,— but, oh!

how halting will be the principle, how frail the hold upon duty, how shorn of power the ability to achieve, when that separation has taken place. It is, indeed, a thread finer than gossamer, escaping the keenest microscope, and laughing at quantitative analysis; but it binds, as nothing else can, the fibres of the soul into a bundle of firmness, a cable which joins two continents.

This spiritual faculty to be of any avail must be used, and used continually. If we neglect to see what is before our eyes, and fail to think upon the meaning of the things perceived, there will be no progress in knowledge. So, also, if we close perversely the eye of the mind, and refuse to profit by the things belonging to its realm of vision, there will be an atrophy of the heaven-born function and a dulness which shall settle like an eternal fog upon the soul. Neither is it enough to employ the faculty in a listless way. It must be trained and cultivated by habits of thoughtful attention and application of the truths suggested.

The eye of sense can be so sharpened as to detect things which are veiled from

the ordinary sight, and produce an amplitude of view that seems incredible to the careless observer.

When the idealizing faculty has been raised to a high degree of efficiency by a process of drill worthy of itself, the man has untold possibilities before him,—the achievements of a spiritual athlete, the wisdom of a seer.

Persistent vision will then have its rightful place and reward,—the ability to retain, reproduce, and glorify the impressions already made upon the soul, which, so far from interfering with new things that may be revealed, will intensify them. Still to see the picture that has been withdrawn, to see it clearly, and to rejoice in it constantly, is to grow rich with heaven's wealth.

Persistence is necessary to all success. The plodders are the ones gaining at length the prizes. Tenacity of purpose, —staying by when others are letting go, maintaining a position when counter-influences have driven off the crowd, holding on one's way when opposing motives have left the path solitary,—this is the mark of a rugged determination which sooner or later receives its reward.

Analogy would lead us to expect, and experience realizes the supposition, that persistency of vision crowns its possessor with blessing.

The man who has cherished his ideals and preserved them intact through stress and storm is the one who attains.

It was this factor that led Cyrus W. Field to victory with the first Atlantic cable ; others had thought upon the problem—he had persisted, and what was at first like a dream in the night became one of the most practical of modern appliances.

Just because St. Paul was not disobedient to the heavenly vision,—clinging to it through all possible difficulties, carrying it into effect in the face of overwhelming discouragements, allowing no bodily tortures to shake his grasp upon it, and letting the sneers of his enemies drift by without so much as bringing a shadow upon its glory,—he could at length exclaim with the voice of a conqueror, "I have kept the faith!" Yes, and the world has acknowledged his success. It is Mount Marcy in the Adirondacks of spiritual

attainment, whose Indian name, Tahawus, "I pierce the clouds," exactly describes the situation.

It is a fine conception that the artists give us by insisting upon painting the face of St. John as the representation of perpetual youth, putting the warm heart-beats of early life into the snows of age, and letting the fire of love triumph over wrinkles and decay.

This is throwing upon canvas the persistence of vision which can make a hundred years seem as but one day.

The child has fancies, butterflies of an hour sporting in the sun, which are replaced by the ideals of youth,—fair visions of things that can be accomplished, noble determinations as to certain goals to be reached, lofty conceptions of the value of life and the certainty of a life beyond, holy impressions of the sacredness of duty, and an overpowering sense of the love of God.

These are the visions to persist in, to summon constantly to the front, to go back to doggedly as the best of realities.

Let not the sterner views of middle life rob you of your early visions nor the practical necessities and monotonies of existence convince you that those glorious plans were empty dreams.

Let not the disappointments of affection deprive you of the belief in love, and above all, see to it that the oppositions of the world, of men, of evil spirits, take not from your soul the bloom of your first faith in God.

Emerson says: "All our progress is an unfolding, like the vegetable bud. You have first the instinct, then an opinion, then a knowledge, as the plant has root, bud, fruit."

It ought to be borne in mind that the easiest to kill is the instinct, which destroyed, spoils the whole progression. It is a mere propensity at the start, a blind tendency to a certain mode of thought and action, a thing which rests upon no solid foundation, but in countless cases it leads out to fair and useful fields; so it is with vision.

Let the cynic sneer at rectitude, and the conduct of life by moral principles, while the wise man regulates his whole plan by

means of them, and the issue — even in this life — is all in favor of the latter.

Let gloomy souls hold to their doctrine of the emptiness of fair visions of heart and mind, while the child-like nature clings to them and realizes them; the outcome will prove which is right.

The blessing and the curse are held up to our choice; we are not compelled, we are not even constrained, but invited with all the attractiveness of a Saviour's voice, and all the winsomeness of a promised heaven, to place ourselves firmly on the side of persistence of vision.

## CHAPTER IV

### WHEN EASY THINGS GO HARD

WINGS represent the easiest method of locomotion,—the perfection and grace of going, the ideal propulsion; but man must creep, and walk, and run; he cannot fly.

To his spirit alone is vouchsafed the wings of the morning, and it is not granted even to the spirit of man that he should be able to use these wings at all times, or for long at a time. He cannot be always upon the mountain top. Neither are his spiritual resources full enough to compel a fair vision to abide constantly, so that we need a caution right here as to our limitations.

There are days when a locomotive is sulky, refusing to work with its accustomed smoothness and speed.

It is not possible always to put a finger

upon the difficulty. You may adjust the parts more accurately, pour oil generously into every joint and bearing, tighten or loosen bolts without number, clean out the fire-box, and then heap it up with fierce burning coal, without dissipating the trouble.

The mood of the machine is depressed, and all day long it will work in a sullen fashion ; but the next day it may start off as free as ever, without the slightest change in the mechanical conditions.

In a lesser degree the same thing can be observed in any machine.

The bicycle will have its days when no amount of coaxing will bring it up to par; the sewing-machine witches and refuses to be pacified ; the clock in the tower gets to "acting up," and the water-motor upon the organ is out of humor for its lofty task. Not only does the blade of the razor become dull and require sharpening, but it is often obstinate, even when it has its keenest edge, and insists upon being laid aside for a time of rest.

The beast of the field is subject to varying moods.

The sensitive race-horse is not always at his best, and there are days when for no apparent reason he has to be humored.

The patient plodder that draws our loads, and carries burdens for us day after day, has his times when he makes it very evident that he must be favored.

The ever-faithful and good-natured dog sometimes refuses his welcome and wants to be let alone.

Even the monkey is not always playful and mirth provoking.

What wonder then that man, the highest and most delicate of all created things, the most complicated of all machines, should be subject to fluctuations of mood and find himself often coming upon days when easy things go hard.

This is not merely to say that man is not always at his best, which we readily acknowledge and get accustomed to expect, but it is the assertion that the average pace cannot always be sustained, and that many times he will come short of what he is generally able to accomplish, yes, and be less of a man in temper and character than is his wont.

Apply the test even to the days of a holiday time; they are not all alike. The mind may be just as free, the circumstances of travel just as favorable, the objects of interest just as enticing, yet some of the days will be dull and heavy, while others are tinted with rosiest hues.

The games that we play—and such there should be for old as well as young, because the play element is important as a steadfast factor in the conservation of energy—show a remarkable perversity in the skill that can be mustered for success in them, at times refusing to evoke any deftness, or to produce any delight, and again surprising us with a touch that is little short of the miraculous.

The ups and downs of college games are things that come into the equation with perfect regularity and without adequate explanation.

Should it excite any wonder then, that your working hours are possessed with the same inexplicable mutations,—days when your regular employments, which you generally attack with zest, become mountains of impossibility, when your allotted portion of toil seems a bitter

thing, and the loads which you have carried for years upon rejoicing shoulders, chafe and weigh you down?—days when anxiety creeps into the mind, and worry knocks constantly at the heart, so that everything seems wrong and hard?

It is true of every worker, but more especially of those in whose work the brain plays the most important part, and where a high ideal is a constant requisite to success.

The artist realizes it most keenly, and views with alarm the fact that just now his brush will do nothing but daub.

The poet has long periods when his thought is nothing but the worst of prose.

The musician is beset now and then with discords and consecutive fifths from which he strives in vain to disentangle himself.

The preacher finds moments when he cannot preach, when his study has lost its charm and the sacred work has in it, for him, no heavenly voice.

Let us look for the explanation and remedy;—gaining wisdom from the one, and applying promptly the other.

The key to the difficulty will generally be found in bodily conditions; minister to this defect as best you can, and do not push the machine when there is a broken ball in the bearings.

Better postpone your journey altogether than spoil the very things by which other days may be filled with pleasure and achievement.

When every fibre is crying out for rest, the man is a fool who increases the tension to the breaking point.

You may have reached a period of mental depression when the only sensible course is in complete change of scene and occupation.

In the changes and chances of this mortal life, you may have been prey, for a season, to discouragement and failure, so that it is imperative to find a different atmosphere, if it exists anywhere.

In saying this we do not lose sight of those poor beings, helpless under the compulsion of circumstances; tired all the time, and yet they cannot stop; groaning and pain-beset, yet driven on and on; exhausted in all their vitalities but going through with a form of living which is

worse than slavery. A taskmaster stands over them in whose eye is no pity, and he lifts his lash to strike while the victim is prostrate.

The thunderbolt of death, which ends this awful business, is the kindest of strokes.

There is a terrible margin of unrelieved suffering within which the hand of compassionate man and tender woman, generous, self-denying, and sympathetic, comes with soothing effect. But after all this subtraction is made from the lump of suffering, what a pile remains!—a mass of moaning, to which we would fain deafen our ears, and close our minds, and still our thoughts, brought about by running the machine when it is not fit to work.

Into the mazes of that labyrinth we can penetrate but a little way, and that without finding the clue. It is a mystery, concerning which we must be content to say, "It is God's world, not ours; He made it, controls it, permits it. Some day He will turn a brighter page; meantime we see through a glass darkly."

Keep out of this slough of despair by

watching the times when easy things go hard.

Refer to your ordinary disposition and point of view—your normal condition.

If you are inclined to shirk and be lazy, this special visitation is only temptation in a new form. Resist it by awakening your torpid energies and rousing yourself to duty's call, scourging your powers into activity, until the conditions are overcome and the enemy routed.

But if, on the other hand, you are naturally a worker and never so happy as when busy, never content unless occupied, and dismayed at the thought of empty moments, then treat the matter in an entirely different way.

Regard the situation as containing in it the voice of a friend, calling you to rest and patience. Let a day drift by, in which you are to do nothing, or do as you please.

Go on some out-of-town errand, give wings to enjoyment's flight, conjure up all pleasant and encouraging memories, seek the most buoyant companionships, and probably the morrow will bring a different mood.

Perhaps you have overestimated your powers and have engaged yourself in something beyond your ability; if so, your only course is in recognizing your limitations, and so gauging your work as to bring it well within the limits of reason.

Do not be too much disturbed by the recurrence of these days. They come to everybody, and will continue to come as long as time rolls on.

Expect them, and make allowance for them. Put them into your program and give this number the calm attention it deserves.

When explanation and remedy are insufficient to explain and relieve, put the day under the head of "moods" and make the best of it.

Twenty-four hours will exhaust it and bring another day and a better mood, in which you can make up for anything that was lost.

In that reckoning time when every man shall have praise of God, it may be that the days most estimable in His sight will be the ones which you counted lost and yet were patient.

## CHAPTER V

### ELASTICITY

SOMETHING to counterbalance the hard days, and to restore equilibrium, is provided in an elastic spirit, which comes nearest to wings in the ability to bring up the soul from depression and the mind from harassing thoughts.

A daily practice in elasticity would work wonders for most people.

There is no more surprising fact in the century just closed than the introduction, improvement, and wide-spread use of india-rubber.

It is employed as a cushion to save a thousand jolts on rail and road; it protects against the rain; it defends from electric shocks; it erases mistaken words, and wherever flexibility is required it reigns a king.

Goodrich mentions ten distinct properties belonging to this wonderful substance,

on each of which an essay could be written. But with its first and foremost characteristic, elasticity, we are now concerned.

This is a quality so well known as to emphasize itself in every possible practical way, so that the marvel is that we do not learn what it can do for us by implication.

Is there not in it a suggestion for the introduction of some pliable elements into the make-up of human character that shall save us from wear and tear, from jar and shock, from fog and mist, and make us more agreeable to ourselves and to others?

It is a hard world for most people; full of pressures, blows, collisions, disappointments, surprises. Ought there not to be some provision for a rebound, so that endurance should be easier, and recovery from concussion more speedy and complete?

Nature does this for the body,—cushioning every joint, so that walking, running, jumping, and even falling, are attended with no unpleasant results.

We can receive the impact of hard strokes with impunity, and the toil of a

lifetime is powerless to kill the elasticity of the human frame.

Reason and faith should combine to bring about some such conditions for the temper and disposition, with a view to accommodating ourselves more readily to varying circumstances, adjusting ourselves more perfectly to the problems, and more tranquilly to the mysteries of life, while reducing to the minimum the friction necessarily arising from contact with people.

Rigidity is important to some things. An iron pillar is doomed unless it possesses this property.

The discipline of the law requires exactly this quality.

It is the element of safety in house and bridge construction.

It belongs to our principles, which should be inflexible, and to our wills, which are all the better if their determinations have in them rigorous stuff.

It has a place in our response to the calls of duty, in regard to which we should be strict with ourselves. Sternness in the hour of temptation, austerity toward

wickedness, these are praiseworthy as an unchanging purpose.

But there is a whole realm of our natures where rigidity is not only unbecoming, but positively subversive of our best interests, and an enemy to peace.

An elastic spirit is the joy of childhood, and the benison of youth. If money could purchase a supply to be carried over into maturer years, rich men would empty their coffers at this gate, for its possession solves the problem of happiness, and makes living a feast of delight; while, on the contrary, when the spirit has grown severe winter has set in upon the soul, and it sometimes comes very early.

A flexible temper is one of the charms possible to the being made a little lower than the angels; a temper that can stand assault, and even a siege; that can go through the hurricane without being ruffled, and can endure the pin pricks of daily annoyance without being soured. It is the temper of the steel that gives its value to the Damascus blade, and allows

it to bend double without breaking; but a beauty of higher polish, and an execution of keener thrust, belong to the man of pliable temper,—a fiery temper, but under perfect control, a nature sensitive to the whip as an Arab steed, but never insubordinate; a quality that will stand the bendings, turnings, and twistings, and then return to its normal state.

A disposition buttressed by such a temper is fit for heaven; or better than that, fit for earth; because the worst that earth can do to such a man will only make his victory more apparent.

A pliant opinion is not an evidence of weakness.

When Disraeli was entering upon public life he was described as a man in quest of an opinion, and no one would accuse him of instability.

When an opinion is found and accepted, it ought not to be clutched too tenaciously; for what is an opinion but the result of thought upon speculative matters, liable to error, and subject to revision, always falling short of certainty, and dealing with

things to which each man has his own peculiar right?

Therefore, to be rigid here renders you offensive to your neighbor and exposes you to constant irritation, while the man who exercises pliability in this regard, and knows how to yield gracefully, if yield he must, is possessed of true prudence.

Make it easy for people to live with you by learning how to live easily with them.

Learn to distinguish between things vital and those that are secondary, holding the latter with a loose rein.

Strive to do right things graciously, for whereas all perceive that "unless religion is converted into terms of conduct, that holy thing becomes a mockery," not many realize that good conduct may be amiable or repellent.

It has been put down as a fact in history that in the repeal of the Stamp Act the British Government "chose to do a gracious act in an ungracious way," and so precipitated a conflict of nations.

The same can be true of individual acts.

Firmness in character is not compromised by gentle behavior.

The substance may be iron, and at the same time its movement characterized by flexibility, as in the universal joint, by which free motion in all directions is secured, and in the toggle joint, which produces great endwise pressure by a very small applied force.

In the mechanics of practical living, the best results are secured by a proper combination of constancy and compliance, a wise adjustment of parts.

The recipe for elasticity is complex.

Given a reasonable bestowment of bodily health, and a temperament at least a shade removed from the melancholic, maintain the former by plenty of exercise and rest, and improve the latter by insisting upon a better point of view, with an inclination always to the adoption of an ideal standard, and you have the basis for a very hopeful experiment.

Cultivate a discernment of the most desirable qualities in every person you meet, and show an appreciation of them, ignoring as far as may be the objectionable traits.

Lessen resistance by not exaggerating evils, or spending strength uselessly in fighting the inevitable.

Be plastic to God's moulding, and believe that sharp strokes and heavy pressures are inflicted and impressed by a loving hand.

Live by the day, cutting up long years into short spaces and traversing them boldly and patiently, not forecasting the future; put self into the background, and foster the sense of humor; be content with what you have, and the recipe will work.

You will be blessed with a good foundation for your life's work, sheltered from many severe temptations, exposed on the sunny side to influences that will be full of daily cheer; and while your house stands upon a rock, underneath will be a cushion, making it at once stable and elastic,—a peculiarity belonging only to the architecture of character.

## CHAPTER VI

### A SUNSHINE RECORDER

ONE of the instruments used by the United States Weather Bureau bears this name. It is used for indicating the duration of sunshine, and the result is obtained through a lens, whose focus moves with the sun and leaves a scorched path upon prepared paper.

Is there anything at all corresponding to this apparatus in the human life? There certainly is, for sunshine is a term not confined to the genial warmth and light that streams from the great central orb. It is used to designate the things that brighten and cheer; the places that are illuminated by choicer rays than material ones; and the natures that carry about with them and irradiate blessings.

No voice is lifted in denial when this assertion is made: There are lives full of sunshine. The wish is universal that

such influences might be wide-spread, and leave none without a share.

The forces competent to produce this effect have been at work through the ages; no portion of man's history, written upon any page to which we have access, is destitute of this sunshine line,—a shining mark of achievement, a record of triumph, showing how good outstripped evil,—and the last century has been by far the best of all in this respect, for the civilizing and humanizing agencies of the present time are upon this broad daylight line.

But it is not with the page of history that we are to deal, but with the indisputable fact, in which every individual is concerned, that there is for him a register, upon which is distinctly traced a line, indicating to every observer the presence or absence of sunshine in the heart.

We do not refer to the books of heaven, which are to judge every man according to his works therein written, of darkness or of light, but to the testimony of the face, for upon the countenance

the work of a sunshine recorder is clearly shown. Just as surely as there is a line there marking the existence of bitterness within, so is there one to tell the story of hidden joy.

Nothing is more abominable than a smirk or simper, and nothing more inviting than a genuine smile, out of which the mystic weaver spins his web, using lines manifold to mark what can never be mistaken, the possession of a glad heart.

It is not the joy of circumstances, the pride of achievement, the bounding pulse of health, which has power to create this distinguishing feature, but the exaltation of heart and mind intent upon a high purpose and holy hope.

This line looks well on any type of countenance. It finds a fitting place in plain visage or royal features. It has the effect of beautifying the expression of any human being fortunate enough to be the subject of its bewitching art.

Its possibilities are therefore open to all, and its results as desirable for one as for another.

Its indispensable requisite is a merry thought and emotion, and if any one says, "That shuts me out of the race," let him first reflect upon what it means, and how much is demanded.

The recorder cannot work upon cloudy days, neither can this indicator portray what is not there.

The ruddy flush on the cheek is the result of the central force within; so is this line of beauty the token of a delight that is real; or,—if delight be too strong a word,—of cheer that is unfeigned. Bishop Coxe said truly, "What is the use of setting the hands of one's dial, when the mainspring is broken?" And what possible benefit in the semblance of a line upon the face, when nothing corresponding is found within?

How can we foster the merry heart which is life's sunshine?

How can we feed that spring that gushes so freely in childhood's hour, and with the touch of years dries up? How enhance that gift so rare and grace so fair, of which the wise man said, He that hath it, sits at a continual feast?

The beast of burden will do very well for an example of patience and steadfastness, but the skylark in his upward flight and trilling ecstacy of song ought to furnish ideals to the spirit, for something to take the place of wings is provided.

The necessary buoyancy can be obtained by ridding ourselves of useless luggage, and the music will spring unbidden when once the conditions are complied with. Tennyson said of Swinburne, "He is a reed through which all winds blow into music."

Mirth may exist without festivity, for that is only the outward circumstance, the chance expression. Mirth has to do with the temper of mind, warmth of heart, lightness of spirit, and belongs to all ages; for while merriment pertains to youth, mirth is most beautiful in the old.

We recall instinctively that it was the father, in the parable, who asserted, "It was meet that we should make merry and be glad"; as it was doubtless in later life that the apostle wrote, "Is any merry? let him sing psalms."

Mirth has, after all, the suggestion of something temporary and unusual, and

must give way, in importance, to a deeper sentiment, — even joy and gladness.

Now, while joy is the most vivid sensation in the soul, it is really outranked by the other; for when the prophet depicts the privileges of the ransomed, we find him saying,—"They shall obtain joy and gladness, and sorrow and sighing shall flee away," giving the emphatic place to gladness, as if the tranquil element was really the more desirable, and the one to be most eagerly cherished.

There are so many things to make us glad, that if we should prepare a list of them and read it over every day the preponderance of numbers would shame us into cheer.

Any due appreciation of the mercies of common life, and even the smallest degree of thankfulness for the fair prospect stretching ahead of the one who believes the promises, would be sufficient to wind the spring that gives motion to the machinery of daily joy.

Perhaps it will not be so easy as this; it may involve more of a struggle, but suppose it does, the battle is worth the

fighting. No doubt there is a strong temptation to yield to our darker moods: the chill of anxiety is favorable to the presence of clouds; the confusions of existence involve us in a tangle that woos distraction; the presence of waste and decay is enough to befog us; the certainty of death overwhelms us. It is hard to come near the icebergs and escape the shivering sensations suggested.

But on the other hand we should note the incentives to brightness, and use them effectively against the armies of cloudland; the evils of existence we believe to have been permitted by One who knows that by means of them alone can the most glorious results be reached.

They are short-lived, and give place speedily to easier things, so that we are not pressed beyond our measure of endurance, and continually the accents of the Master's voice are heard: "Be of good cheer."

The victory over moroseness will grow into a habit so ennobling as to transform the nature. It will take the edge off affliction, and prolong the presence

of blessing, while it will prove to others a mighty encouragement.

One of the professors in a divinity school lost his eldest son by drowning. When he preached again before the students it was from the text, " Rejoice in the Lord alway, and again I say, rejoice."

All the benefits of a three-years preparation to help men in living might not equal in effectiveness this single example of courage sublime and cheer unquenchable.

If we have wandered a little from the record written upon the face, it is because the possession of the fact is far more valuable than its registry.

The outward and visible sign is not so important as the inward and spiritual grace, and if the desire to glorify your God burns within you, then be persuaded that here is your chance to serve the Lord with gladness, and, while heaven will reveal the fulness of the work accomplished, part of it will be traced even here, in the light upon the countenance.

## CHAPTER VII

### AN INTREPID SPIRIT

THE man who was ruddy and of a fair countenance, in olden time, was the one who faced the lion, the bear, and the giant, without faltering; for next to sunshine in the face there is nothing like courage in the heart.

A celebrated Greek epic poem introduces a character called the stentor, who comes announcing a message with a very loud voice.

When the African natives are called to battle, it is through the instrumentality a great war drum, called *Nogara*.

The bugle blast at about break of day, which summons the soldier to rise, and the sentinels to cease challenging, is the well-known reveille.

This twentieth century, with all its refinements and advancements, has not

outgrown the necessity for just such calls, — bold, clear, unmistakable summons to action and to face every foe courageously.

But boldness is nothing if disconnected from the spring that feeds it,—an intrepid spirit, which addresses itself to impossibilities even, with a force destined to defy them, and entertains questions to which no answer appears, without the slightest trace of faltering, while to obstacles and annoyances it seems oblivious.

There is a steep mountain to be climbed, and one feels called upon to make the attempt; a long race to be run, and he will persevere until the line is crossed; a hard battle to be fought, and he will play the man so as to please Him who hath called him to be a soldier.

He will be accused of having too high an opinion of his own abilities, but he may reply, in the words of Dr. Van Dyke, "'Genius is talent set on fire by courage,' and I have taken my talents as I find them, fused them in a hot fire to give them temper, used them at their best for His honor who endowed me thus."

He will be called audacious and rash, venturing upon the brink of precipices,

and attempting tasks beyond his powers, but he will go on undismayed, and let the issue justify the method.

If failure come, and the prophecy of the croaker be fulfilled, he will go down fighting, and faithful to the end.

When we are asked to separate the intrepid spirit into its elements, and put our finger upon the qualities that in combination work so admirably, we are apt to content ourselves with saying: The man had an unusually strong body, muscles equal to the requirements of a bull-fight, sinews that would sustain themselves under any toil or strain, nerves that would be perfectly quiet while an earthquake shock was in progress, a frame-work that the freezings of seventy winters and the meltings of as many summers only serve to toughen; and this fund of physical vigor has saturated the spirit of the man, and made it of the heroic kind.

Or another will analyze the product, and attribute it to that mysterious possession, a strong will. Perhaps he is right, for, as a battering-ram crushes in the walls

of a besieged city, so does a man with torrents of will force his way to success.

Channing truly said, "Men are attracted by no quality so much as sovereign greatness of will."

But admiration is not explanation, and we have not advanced a step in the solution of an intrepid spirit by saying that it is an exhibition of great will-power; we have still the task of defining the will, and that is beyond us.

When we call it the power of choosing, the resolution to carry out the choice eludes us; it is more than inclination, more than arbitrary power, but the limits and the source have never yet been labelled.

Happy the man who possesses it,—wise the one who increases it,—lofty the one who directs it. You must not leave it out of your consideration, though you may be compelled to admit that it baffles your interpretation.

Still another attempt brings some positive help with it, for it asserts that we find what we are seeking in the absence of fear.

All the terrors bound up in material things have been untied and throttled one by one.

All the consternation aroused by the enmity of his fellow-men, and by the opposition of principalities and powers, has been dissipated, not by philosophy, but by faith.

All the rumblings of a judgment to come have been turned into a song; and the plunge of death, by which we are launched into the darkness of the unknown, is contemplated without a shudder by him who has learned to say, "I know that my Redeemer liveth."

If the man is truly fearless, he is a Hercules indeed, and though not the son of Jupiter and Alcmena, he is sufficient for more than twelve labors.

We come still nearer the mark when our examination of component parts leads us to say: Here is a man with an undeviating purpose, by means of which he is able to blind his eyes to inferior things, to ignore mere conventionalities, to turn aside from distracting temptations, to accept conditions, but never to swerve from

his one conclusion, to which he advances step by step because of concentration and aim.

We have gone far enough in our analyzing; let us make an application, which, while limited to the minister, may easily be made to fit the worker in every field.

The minister of to-day who is to command respect and win success, must have an intrepid spirit.

He must conserve all his physical powers, cherish and increase them with a holy care, use them with the wisdom that knows when to work and when to stop.

He must look to God for the will by means of which he can journey far into the realm of achievement.

He must banish all fears by right views of the world, by strong belief in God, and by a grip upon immortality that slackens not under any touch.

He must be inspired by a purpose which can have no loftier setting forth than is given in three words,—to please God.

Then he will go forth to a ministry whose depth no plummet can sound, and whose reach no measuring line can span.

All his ministrations will be easier and more effective. When he preaches, it will be with no uncertain tones, with no shrinking lest his words awaken enmities.

It will be with the stroke of a bold swimmer that he ventures out to bring in a sinking soul—yes, out into waters beyond his depth, and fears them not.

When he rouses men to duty, it will be with the vehemence that belongs to one himself fully persuaded of the sacredness of the theme, and the horror of its neglect.

When he persuades men to rely upon the promises of God, he will put into those promises a rapture of coloring possible only to the painter who has embraced the hope of glory as the dearest treasure of his existence.

The model is Christ, for while the people wondered at His gracious words, they said also, "He speaks as one having authority."

In reading the Scriptures, there will be the firmness of a deep-rooted conviction manifest in the tones of his voice.

When he leads the congregation in prayer or praise, the note of constancy will help the worshipper; when he ad-

ministers the Sacraments, it will be evident that together with the mystery there is a great reality, concerning the efficacy of which he has not entertained a single doubt.

In everything he does there will be the courage of faith, which is more than boldness, and does not partake in the least of intolerable assurance.

There are three quotations upon which our eyes should frequently rest, and I place them here for ready reference:

"It becomes no man to nurse despair, —
But in the teeth of clenched antagonisms
To follow up the worthiest."

TENNYSON.

"What a new face courage puts upon everything! Here is a man who comes in with determination and by his very voice and step puts a stop to defeat, and begins to conquer; for they can conquer who think they can."

EMERSON.

"Faith, mighty faith, the promise sees,
And looks to that alone,
Laughs at impossibilities
And cries, 'It shall be done.'"

## CHAPTER VIII

### UNHEARD MELODIES

THIS is an expression used in a line of Keats's poetry which gives us exactly the suggestion we are looking for to signify a great and blessed help in the attempt to be glad, namely, by keeping a song in the heart.

In all warfare music has a part, and martial strains from trumpet, fife, and drum are used to keep the soldiers brave, their steps united and steady, their thoughts keyed to glory and triumph; but this is a heard melody.

In the spiritual conflict, where the foes are just as real, and far more numerous, the weapons as sharp and deadly, the field as thickly strewn with wounded, we need something that shall save us from faltering, something to nerve the soul for

a continued struggle when the issue seems determined against it, something to make us feel that we are not alone in our most solitary and bitter moment ; and that need is supplied in an unheard melody.

Its presence or absence makes just the difference between a day in which the wings of the morning won the race, making everything bright, and a day heavy with cloud, or darker still with tempest ; just the difference between serving the Lord with gladness, and being hastened to an unwelcome duty with a stern command.

It is an Apostolic thought that if the light of Christ has shined upon us, it will be the most natural thing in the world to make melody in the heart to the Lord, — giving thanks always, for all things.

Surely in that season when we are brought into daily meditation upon the wondrous cross, and reminded that just before going through the agony in the garden, Christ sang a hymn, we may well ask ourselves whether we are not omitting some mighty safeguard and incentive if

we have failed to acquaint ourselves with unheard melodies. Unheard in more senses than one, and first of all by the crowd.

The song is a still small voice that has in it no carrying power at all.

It does not have resonance enough to attract the multitude—it does not even reach to your nearest neighbor.

All unheard by them, it is just a song for yourself and your God.

The very beauty and charm of this melody is that its sweetness is all unshared,—in fact it is one of the few treasures that we must not, cannot share, chiming with a clearness for you like the church bells on Easter morning, but for you alone ; chanting in words so clear and distinct that each syllable makes itself felt, but in one heart only,—your own.

And what are these words, and this tune of such mystic force? Let each man answer for himself.

It is a tune learned long ago in childhood's hour, and they are words recited, perhaps, at a mother's knee ; fraught with

associations so vivid that all the forgetfulness of years has no power to dim their sway ; an unheard melody, but so sacred to us that we prefer to leave it unnamed. We say, "That is my own, let it rest there."

But again, a thing may be unheard because the listening ear is defective,—the auditory processes a little impaired.

There is a stop on the organ so fine that it seems like the echo of far-off Bethlehem's song, ravishing the ear that is able to take in its meaning.

But for many in the church there is complete silence. The choir is still. The melody is unheard.

The whisper of the Lord—for such is the rendering of the verse—is with them that fear Him, and with them only ; for by all other natures it would be unheard, and hence wasted.

God talks to us, and sings to us, in a winsome way.

There is a knocking at the door of our hearts from fingers Divine, but the melody may be unheard. The soul is all

perturbed with other sounds. The noises of the world have been let in where stillness should have prevailed, and because of distraction we have missed something that would have lifted us, even as upon wings of the morning.

We have missed the song of God.

Therefore, this Lent, withdraw thyself for a little every day, and be still.

Once again, there are melodies unheard just because no one cares to listen. There is no defect in the music, all the strings are in perfect tune, the voice is as clear as the nightingale's trill, the words are as persuasive as a lover's appeal,—but no one cares. Absorbed in other scenes and sounds, the people turn away from this,—in fact it is as if it was not. It remains an unheard melody.

So it fares with the song of redemption, and with the psalms of holy church.

Sometimes they peal forth with trumpet sounds, and again in quieter measures, but always with a sweetness that would win the whole world if the world would only listen.

Yes, if the cadence of that unheard melody could only reach them, what a transformation would take place !

There is a person who has heard it, and learned it.

It has brought courage to his fainting spirit. It has put a new light into his countenance. It has given elasticity to his step, or made him patient in sickness.

His eye gleams with a vision of the unseen. His voice rings like a clarion from the mountain-top, for while he is speeding on his way, he has a song in his heart.

And is it too much to say that for those who cherish the unheard melodies, time is vanquished—swiftness takes the place of dragging steps, yea, the wings of the morning supplant the leaden feet !

## CHAPTER IX

### LAMPS AFTER SUNRISE

WINGS for swiftness, and gladness for immediate use, should be the thought of every Christian.

With the prayer that the Lord would shortly accomplish the number of His elect and hasten His kingdom, should go the effort on our part in the same direction.

And nothing will so surely add to that blessed number and speed that glorious day as to let our light shine now and here, while the darkness is great.

Lamps after sunrise are poor, faded, yellow things, blots upon the landscape; the sooner they are extinguished the better, while a few hours before, especially at midnight, they were of inestimable value.

They lighted the traveller on his way, they kept back the hand of plunderer and

highwayman, they gave cheer to the sleepless, tossing one, they marked the difference between civilization and barbarism.

When the day has dawned, and the perfect, material light has come, then that which is in part shall be done away, the lamps shall be extinguished.

Useful even in their imperfection while the blackness abounded,— useless even to ignominy when their shining has been eclipsed.

The time is surely coming when heaven shall come in with its glorious daybreak,— when all the lights of earth shall be as nothing.

Even the sun shall be darkened, and the moon shall not give her light; yea, the very stars shall fall, for however brilliant and necessary they may be for present purposes, when put into comparison with the perfect light, they shall be as poor as tapers,—lamps after sunrise.

But now the lamps are all that we have, and even with their limitations are sufficient to serve great and holy ends; so that the thing to do is to use them while

they are of consequence, and not wait until they are outclassed.

The light which you can bring to bear upon the mystery of existence is at best but a feeble thing. It sends only a few rays athwart the blackness, but those few rays, if made available now, may save a soul from death, and cover a multitude of sins.

The lamp of helpfulness, which is fed and kept aflame by constant effort, seems less than a candle, and liable to be extinguished by a breath, but use its radiance now.

Help the child to walk while its tottering footsteps need upholding and its early courage needs fostering, for soon it will have mastered the process, and your help then will be a lamp after sunrise.

Assist that struggling man while he is buffeting the waves; for once upon land your rope will be no better than a thread.

Help the church when it is weak, and maintain the cause of Christ while it is despised, for after its triumph is achieved the opportunity will have passed.

People come in to help when it is too late. All laudations of the dead are lamps after sunrise. One little ray of praise while the breath was in the body might have cheered a soul back to life; but it was withheld, and now the ear is closed to the sweet sound.

Your eye is full of welcome and appreciation now, but the brother's eye is closed, and cannot rejoice in the help of your countenance.

Show your appreciation quickly, tomorrow may withdraw your chance.

A brave, believing, cheerful man or woman, going along steadily as if everything would be all right, expecting trouble and meeting it serenely when it comes, is a lamp in the darkness.

How many have been helped by it when all seemed perplexed and unjust! But the time will come when full daylight shall be cast upon all the purposes of the Almighty, and then courage will be at a discount.

Exactly this is true with regard to all our attitude towards God.

How we shall praise Him when we shall

see Him as He is! How our hearts will overflow with reverential love! How our desires will be kindled to do something for Him!

But our chance is now,—in the darkness, when the tiniest spark of faith counts for more in God's sight than a whole burst of illumination in the day of revelation of all things.

Fill your lamp of rejoicing, and keep it supplied when low, because the light is so much needed now, both for your own sake and that of others. Just now, when the sky is overcast, and the eclipse is on. Just now, when burdens are so heavy and hearts so frequently bowed down. Just now, when the world is hungry for light, give full play to the wings of the morning and speed forth thy light.

## CHAPTER X

### UNBOUGHT MINISTRIES

WHAT shall we have therefor? is a question that has spoiled the flight of many a kindly deed.

Will it be worth while to make this exertion, and do this work? has answered itself so often in the negative, that the wings of the morning have been folded for many a day.

The lesson has to be learned early, and practised continually, Give, hoping for nothing in return, before we become truly wise with the wisdom that is from above, and genuinely helpful in diffusing the daylight.

The outgoing impulse must not be checked by the incoming fear, "It will not pay." That obstacle lies in the pathway of every noble deed and kindling desire, but it can be surmounted.

There is one consideration, having in

it sufficient buoyancy to lift the strenuous soul over the barrier, namely, we are following in the steps of Him who came not to be ministered unto but to minister, and who with a thought so keen and wide that He allowed no forgetfulness of any human being to mar His boundless compassion, yet forgot himself, and the reward.

His life was a series of unbought ministries.

This combination of words from Horace Bushnell contains a whole bundle of thoughts which it may be worth while to unroll.

It is plainly contrasted with those mercenary actions which crowd the calendar — things done because it paid to do them.

It brings before us a vision of deeds absolutely free from the thought of self-gain ; of services undertaken with no expectation of reward ; of attentions rendered spontaneously and gratuitously.

It suggests also those ministries in which the remuneration is out of all proportion to the worth of the product,—

where the pay is a pittance, and the offering that of life, whether given in a moment's time, or the long-drawn sacrifice.

Perhaps the highest example is that of the mother, who through all her hours ministers lovingly to the needs of child or children, promotes their best development, imbeds the highest principles, toils for their noblest success and continues the process when success is most doubtful, or even after failure has thrown across the scene its forbidding shadow.

There is a recompense, sometimes greater, more often smaller, but it has not been thought of at all by the one whose patience and affection have been so unstinted.

This unbought ministry is one of the brightest and most magnetic facts in the memory of every man, and the thing that can be best appealed to for sacred purposes.

Then there is that much-criticised and always undervalued person, the Sunday-school teacher.

His services are entirely unpaid, and not only that, but they are given at stated times, coming round so quickly, and

making their demands upon him without regard to the state of health or feeling.

His effort is made in the face of great difficulties and discouragements, such as the irregularity and indifference of pupils, the inadequacy of time and methods, the negligence of others better situated than himself to do the work, the consciousness of his own deficiency.

In spite of all these he perseveres, and he belongs to the army of those whom John Bright praised, saying, "The Sunday-school teachers of Scotland have done more for the civilization of that realm than her statesmen."

Have you a friend?—then there is an example of an unbought ministry, for true friendship cannot be purchased.

Money may be able to surround itself with servants; place and power may cause a man to be crowded with those who pay him attentions; but the friend who cherishes a sentiment of esteem, and renders the priceless aid of an expressed regard, does it from an instinct so high and deep that the suggestion of price would be an affront.

All the sweetest blessings of life are wrapped up in the unbought ministries of friendship.

One of the kindling remembrances of the Cuban war is the fact that volunteers for the Red Cross work offered themselves by thousands to serve in most difficult and dangerous places, with nothing to show for it but food and transportation, so that it has been said that as many nurses could have been procured as there were enlisted men.

Who can estimate the good that has resulted from these unbought ministries, and from deeds of the same description in every clime and age, most of them unheralded and unrecorded, save in the great volume which the angels keep!

## CHAPTER XI

### THE OVERSHOT WHEEL

He who uses the wings of the morning may fly too fast and too far; so religious joy may be overdone, — it may become a hobby, a sort of fetich, a mild kind of insanity; and when thus abused, it is an offence to others, and a menace to the man himself.

A rein and even a curb has to be upon the steed of gladness.

A thorn in the flesh was necessary in St. Paul's case to keep him from being exalted above measure.

A little reflection upon the danger of overdoing may save us from the mistakes of Wolsey, concerning whom Warham said, "The man is mad with too much joy."

One of the most picturesque things in

the combination of art and nature is the overshot wheel, changing the running stream into available power, and doing it so gracefully that the eye never tires of the scene.

At first sight it appears to bring into harmony the maximum of efficiency with the ideal of beauty, for it receives all the impact of the water upon the highest bucket or blade, and treasures up the weight of the falling water just where it can be most useful in producing motion, while it discharges the water at the lowest point, and allows it to flow gently away.

An immense wheel, like that at Laxey, on the Isle of Man, 72½ feet in diameter and capable of developing 150 horse-power, seems the acme of mechanical skill. But it has been relegated to the past on account of its large size, its liability to become clogged with ice in winter, and the fact that it is lacking in available energy.

It has been superseded by the turbine, in which the water enters and leaves at all points of the circumference, acting

both by impulse and reaction, and developing ninety per cent. of efficiency.

It is entirely concealed from view, — spoils a graphic picture, — but since it brings the result, advantageous velocity, it is bound to rule.

There is a better way of doing things than overdoing them.

There is a way of deriving full efficiency from various actions and emotions that is impossible to the one who insists upon using, metaphorically, the overshot method; in this busy age, when life whirls on so tumultuously, waste must be avoided, and the temptation to a wrong application of force steadily resisted.

Impulse is a grand thing, capable of producing results unknown to the one who always measures, weighs, debates, but an overshot impulse is a mistake.

There is something very attractive about it, like the free, unrestrained motions of childhood, — the faces fired by eagerness, the impetuous rush that scorns limitations and laughs at law; but when we are looking for real strength, we

choose the rugged countenance of a man, and a character resting upon duty.

Impulse has its sphere, and a most useful one; it is a sudden, momentary force, which we must make use of instantly, or not at all, for by the time we have fully worked out the problem suggested by the impulse, there may be no time or energy felt to do the thing itself.

It is a transient feeling, which if not utilized at the time it arises, ebbs away, and is lost forever.

This being so, we are instigated to put our impulses into breathless performance, which is the overshot method, and by so doing involve ourselves in a waste of power, if not in more serious complications.

There is a better application possible, which does not make so pretty a picture, but achieves a far higher end, by bringing every impulse within the circumference of reason before we allow it to turn us a hair's-breadth.

If it proves to be not strong enough to stand the test, it was worthless at the start. But if, on the other hand, it will

work with reason, the accomplishment will be great and enduring.

An overshot pleasure is a common form of activity. It exhibits itself in feverish enjoyments, and holiday diversions that go to extremes.

Instead of a few exhilarating miles on the wheel, the man tries to do a hundred or two.

In the place of a day filled with the agreeable sensation of reasonable relaxation, the night is added to the day, and both are spoiled.

There is a better way of utilizing this mighty factor in life, and a constituent which should find a place in every age and condition, viz., to stop a little short of satiety, and while the zest is still unblunted.

This will bring real recuperation,—take the thought out of the accustomed ruts, brighten the present prospect, and increase the ability for to-morrow's task.

The broad field of work, man's greatest boon, and the means by which he

occupies and uses his best faculties, is the place of all others where overdoing is to be guarded against.

A mistake here in the application of power is fatal, for exhausted vitality is not easily, and perhaps never, restored. Employ yourself within the whole circle of your limitations, and sturdily refuse a single step over the border line.

The temptation to use the overshot method in work arises from the fact that it makes such a good display. People look on and admire. "How impetuous he is, — how unceasing is his toil, — he has nerves of whip-cord,— nothing can wear him out!"

But the better way, which arouses little comment, because its springs are hidden, is the exertion that comes from principle, used up to the limit of capacity and no further, regardless of human praise or blame, with a nobler end in view than accumulation or fame.

Napoleon said that the art of war is to gain time when your strength is inferior. It is a maxim applicable to all the struggles of life.

The theme is capable of being amplified in many directions. It is true with reference to our economies, our friendships, our ambitions, that the wrong method is frequently taken, with a corresponding waste of power.

Even in the realm of religion, there is the liability of overdoing.

The intention of religion is to produce in largest measure, and most effective way, personal righteousness —to help men in living soberly, righteously, and godly in this present world, looking for the blessed hope.

It involves a result that cannot be represented by figures, it refuses to be gathered into statistics, or weighed by material balances, — its processes are shut away from the eyes of men, hidden deep in the heart and mind.

The noisy machinery which insists upon doing its work in the full glare of the sunlight, and calls for loud declarations and protestations, laying bare motives that ought to be too sacred for publicity, and insisting that the number of revolutions is the only measure of accomplishment, does not represent the highest

efficiency, or properly express the method of Him who said, "The Kingdom of God is within you."

Our aim at perpetual rejoicing is not a mistake, but it must never conflict with the necessity for being at the same time, sober and vigilant.

We are to be transformed by the renewing of our minds, but not necessarily transported, or moved in any way beyond that which is our reasonable service.

## CHAPTER XII

### CUTTING THE TENDRILS

To have life in the vine is one thing, to have such life in it as to make it a thing of beauty in its place, laden with fragrant blossoms at the right time, and with luscious and plentiful fruit for the autumn days, — a vine fairly asserting its vigor and luxuriance, — is quite another; for such a vine, helping to make the valleys laugh and sing, the tendrils must take firm hold upon the trellis.

If one is seeking the best argument for the existence of God, and the finest line of thought in favor of the immortality of the soul, he cannot do better than study the pages of Theodore Parker, in his book called *Views of Religion.*

But when he searches farther in the same volume for recommendations as to the proper way in which to support his

belief, and realize this august possibility, he is met with something that may be summed up in the above caption,—Cut the Tendrils. Sever yourself from every tie that binds, refuse the ligaments that hold to any prescribed service, insist upon perfect freedom of thought and action, and thus prove your manhood.

The mistake, as we deem it, lying behind all such advice is in a wrong conception of what religion really is, and how alone it can be sustained.

Reason is an oak, religion is a vine.

The former stands erect, — strikes its roots deep into a soil that has been prepared, and stretches out branches, strong in their own sufficiency, capable of defying the storm.

The latter is a growth no less strong, and far more beautiful, which, however, demands for its early life, and later maintenance, the support of a trellis, to which it fastens itself by tendrils, and by means of which it climbs to a great height, produces a glorious vintage, and adorns the very structure to which it has been indebted for all its luxuriance.

If you cut the tendrils, you stunt its development, and in all probability destroy its life.

These are very familiar words that we quote: "I am the vine; ye are the branches"; and in connection with them, we ought to ask immediately, and apply the answer practically: What are the tendrils? Things that fasten us to the structure,—whatever it may be, the face of a rock perhaps, or a firm framework that is made to last. Things that are put forth from the vine itself, though they seem not to be nourished with her life blood. They are dry and hard, like a string. They bear no leaves, flowers, or fruit. Yet without them the vine is a failure and the vintage dry. They keep the vine in place, save it from the wind's unfastening force, raise it from the ground, keep it in the air and sunlight, give to it the outspreading and uplifting which at length constitute its glory. A line from Southey calls it

"The ten thousand tendrilled vine."

There are things called by hard names oftentimes, which, nevertheless, help us to

climb toward God and good, and are in fact indispensable to the process; they are forms, ceremonies, religious habits, clearly defined doctrines, appointed days and places. Say, if you will, that they are without life; but say, if you are wise, that the life is impossible without them.

A form of prayer is a dead thing in itself, even such an one as the Lord's Prayer; it is but a tendril. Yet by it how many souls have climbed the mountain, and covered the bare rock with a beauty of life that is fairly enchanting, put forth leaves like those for the healing of the nations, and borne clusters of grapes larger than those of Eshcol, laden with odors that have refreshed the ages!

Will you cut those tendrils, and refuse prayer because it may be only a form? Then the vine shall languish.

The sacrament of the Lord's Supper is often termed a ceremony, and in one part it is nothing more; just the outward, visible sign — two simple material elements, and a few never varied words.

It has been denounced as lifeless and

even useless, and by many has been cut out of the program of life.

To others, yea, to the great company of God's believing people, it has been a tendril, and as such has lifted them from the low and grovelling, and given a chance for the inward and spiritual grace to quicken the whole existence; so that a life refreshed and invigorated even to the end, a spirit attuned to the angels' song, "Glory to God in the Highest," has been the best proof of its necessity and power.

When you cut yourself off from the Bread of God, you are killing the life of the vine.

The habit of church-going is a thing that has been held up to ridicule; to some ears there is nothing in it but the clanking of chains; it is but the mechanical repetition of an early mistake, an inherited compulsion that should be overcome by a free, reasoning spirit.

How then is the fact accounted for that by these tendrils chiefly, the Church of God has spread out its branches unto the river, and given to its members a

development of character that challenges all competition?

Doctrines framed into a creed are but a dry collection of words, yet by means of them, repeated ignorantly in childhood's hour, and perhaps doubtingly in manhood's day, but lovingly and thankfully in the time of age, the life has been helped to mount towards God,—has been kept in proper place, and linked firmly to the Church.

We need something to keep our resolutions up to the doing point, and our aspirations to the praying point, which is exactly what the Creed does for us,—recited in the church on all appointed days of worship.

One of the benefits derived from a right use of the Lenten Season is that it strengthens and multiplies the tendrils, confirming our hold upon the things that cannot be shaken.

Shall we not guard and use these tendrils that keep faith from falling and make all virtues to flourish?

They are small things, but they tie us to great results.

## CHAPTER XIII

### I HATE TO GO TO CHURCH

THE multiplied services of the Holy Season are intended, not merely as an offering of time, strength, thought, and praises to the Most High, but also as a definite means of increasing the sentiment that lies close at the root of gladness, "Lord, I have loved the habitation of Thine house, and the place where Thine honor dwelleth."

If they were merely for the fulfilment of a duty, their existence would be justified; if they served as nothing more than an opportunity for all to give something to God, they would be praiseworthy. Many people have no money to give, no especial gifts or talents to employ for God, but they can find a few moments each day, and summon strength and resolution sufficient for a journey to the house of God.

Other things are calling them, other voices of obligation are speaking to them, but they have turned from these, and come to prayer.

They have not much to offer, but such as they have they bring,

> "Holy offerings rich and rare,
> Offerings of praise and prayer."

In addition however to the duty and opportunity, there is suggested the thought of privilege, the sense of a royal companionship, and a divine blessing, which those lose entirely who refuse to go, or hate to go.

If people expressed their sentiments more readily, the above sentence would be frequently heard.

As it is, the restraints of society and a decent regard for the opinions and prejudices of others have made it customary to signify this dislike by absence and marked neglect.

If questioned upon the subject, various reasons are given, so familiar that they hardly need repeating.

One man maintains that his attitude is

due to the barren services, tedious sermons, discordant music.

Another claims that the remembrance of boyhood days, when he was compelled to go, has implanted a distaste that he cannot overcome.

Occasionally you find one who gives as an explanation, that the very idea of worship is abhorrent to him, and that his ideal for the betterment of mankind is something that shall teach them how to stand erect, and stiffen their spines for action, rather than to prostrate themselves before anything or any one.

Perhaps the most philosophical of them all says plainly: "I hate to go, because I 'm tired, and want to rest."

There is a consideration that should have weight with all fair-minded people: that there is no compulsion in church going.

No pressure is brought to enforce an unpalatable diet.

No constraint is used to hedge people in for an hour against their will.

Persuasion may be used, but the only suggestion of the word "must" comes

from the conscience and the heritage of training.

Perhaps our hatred would disappear if once it was realized that we are perfectly free to go or stay away, as we choose,—that the situation is entirely in our own hands, and that no one is trying to play the tyrant with us.

Possibly it might appeal to some to reflect that our prepossessions are often unfair, and have arisen from an imperfect acquaintance with the facts in the case; just as we find ourselves sometimes entertaining an intuitive dislike to a person for no clear reason, and have found, later on, that we were entirely mistaken in our estimate.

Would it not be wise to attempt, at least, a revision of our feelings towards the Church, and give the institution a chance to redeem itself in our regard by a fair trial, under most favorable conditions?

Again, it may be wholesome to ponder a very plain fact in life: that oftentimes the things we hate to do are the very

things most important to be attended to, and bring us our choicest satisfactions; for example, work, study, self-restraint.

What a surprise it would be to awaken some day to the knowledge that the miles travelled over to attend the services of the Church, and the hours spent therein, had become the pleasantest things in our recollection; that hate changed first to toleration, then to liking, and finally to keen satisfaction!

An old lady of eighty-nine used to sit at her window on Sunday morning to see the people pass on their way to church, and said that it gave her delight just to think how much they were going to enjoy.

A cheerful old age seems to be almost wholly dependent upon the solace that religion gives, and that comes to those who have cherished and cultivated the religious instincts by careful habits.

The explanation of almost every kind of dislike in this direction lies in the failure to identify oneself with the institution.

The person who has helped to erect a church building, and felt an interest in

seeing the work grow, and its influence increase, finds little difficulty in learning to enjoy the processes of the work.

It has ceased to be an outside matter, and has become part of his own life and thought.

It is taken as a matter of course that the minister should love to go; in fact, for one who hated his work, and did it only through the compulsion of getting a living, we entertain contempt.

Anything that he may do for the Church is spoiled because of his attitude.

A favor is ruined if it is done grudgingly, and we would rather go without the benefit than to accept it thus.

Doubtless, the same rule applies to the service of God.

A moment's thought as to how the minister comes to love his work may suggest a cure for the layman's dislike.

The minister was a layman first, with all the antipathies of the class to which he belonged.

As a boy he disliked restraints, and as a youth he was fired with all the hostilities that assail holy things.

But something came to turn his attention more thoughtfully to sacred questions; something induced him to link himself with the work, and an intimate acquaintance therewith completely changed his point of view, so that he learned to relish and to love what was formerly distasteful to him.

A converted woman of India offered the following prayer: "O Christ, I did not know Thou hadst done so much for me, or I would have come to Thee long ago"; and we might add, "I would have come to Thee oftener."

## CHAPTER XIV

### A SAINT WITHIN THREE DEGREES

ONE of the evident uses of Lent is to make us bear our cross more patiently.

Whatever form it may take, and it is generally that of trivial annoyances, and a doing of unpleasant things over and over again ; whatever intensity it may assume, and sometimes the burden and weight seem beyond endurance,—still to view it as of God's appointment, and to carry it as if placed in our hand by the Saviour Himself, with "For My sake" written upon the head of it, much grace will be needed, and much will be vouchsafed in answer to prayer, and in response to earnest effort.

The best evidence of our having gained in the cross-bearing endeavor will be the improved temper with which we meet common vexations.

The wings of the morning are worth

something if they can lift us easily over small obstructions, even if we have not yet learned to soar with them.

There is a class of people—and it is a large one—with whom it is perfectly delightful to live so long as the thermometer does not vary more than three degrees.

If the mercury stays at 70° Fahrenheit, or does not sink below 67°, they are reasonable and even pious, their tempers are equable, their spirits are good, their view of life is roseate, and altogether you put them down as just the best people in the world.

But when the frost gets into the air, never so little, and creeps into the house, to make the thought of chilliness possible, a change comes over them that is pitiful to behold and painful to contemplate.

All the geniality has departed, the well rounded nature has changed into a mass of sharp angles, the altruistic spirit has turned to vinegar, and a single hour of companionship with them is sixty minutes of martyrdom, — fussiness and fretfulness are in every tone of their voice.

The same thing occurs, and is perhaps intensified, when the unruly mercury dares to show his head above the 70° mark; for by this turn of his magic wand, he has changed the lovely being into a panting and abusive creature, taken away every sign of elasticity, put up the bars against every endeavor, and made an overheated self so prominent that it is extremely uncomfortable for any second self to approach.

Inasmuch as it is next to impossible to keep the temperature within those specified degrees for any length of time, as the variations of nature insist upon making themselves felt, and intruding where they are not wanted, the hours of saint-hood for this class are few, and the hours in which they are possessed with the demon of impatience many, so that while it is a privilege to be with them at times, it is a martyrdom to have to live with them.

The causes lying behind this vexatious exhibition are not hard to determine.

A lack of robustness will account for

most of it. The hardy mountaineer takes no notice whatever of temperature ; heat and cold are alike welcome to him, and to face the storm is an amusement.

Where the throb of health is vigorous, the body adjusts itself instantly to all changes, and the comfortable feeling is possible amid discomfort.

So far, then, as these querulous people are the victims of poor health they should be treated charitably, unless it is perfectly evident that their condition arises from plain and stubborn neglect of the ordinary rules of living.

We should fortify our bodies to the extreme limit, if for no other reason than to make living easier for ourselves and others.

There is another element in this problem that is not sufficiently taken into account, which is the failure to develop the ability to meet difficulties, to expect them, to defy them, and conquer silently.

This faculty needs training from the earliest period of life, and to be brought into exercise constantly.

The petty annoyances of daily life are gymnastics for developing the muscles of resistance until they are knotted for in-

stant action; then, though there are myriad foes to one's peace of mind, they are defeated *en masse*, or one by one, leaving the individual master of himself.

It is the fine art of self-control, an art which it is difficult to achieve, but which is capable of painting the fairest pictures of life, with the storm for a background.

We house ourselves too carefully, and nurse our ailments too fondly.

Very much would be gained by an occasional voluntary subjection to the cold and tempest, just to see whether we could not be able to resist them, and once discovering that, the minor variations would be powerless against us. We should laugh at them. The gain would be incalculable. We should graduate from the class of uncomfortables, endured by some, shunned by many, and deplored by all, into a class of those who know how to make the best of things as they are, and when they are different from what they would have them, say nothing.

## CHAPTER XV

### RECOGNITION

NO fairer task can be proposed for daily Lenten effort than this,—to dispel the thought from some one's mind that nobody cares.

If you will use the wings of the morning to carry the message of appreciation, you will be a light-bearer indeed.

Recognition is simply taking notice of a person or thing, and making some formal acknowledgment of merits discovered.

It is a factor unneeded in the problems of many lives, for they have reached a nobility which has lifted them into a higher region than recognition can ever aspire to.

There are souls so lofty that an attempt to recognize them would be almost an insult.

The very fact that acknowledgment, to be of any value, must proceed from one

of the same rank, or a higher one, narrows the circle to a very great degree for royal souls.

To quote from Goethe, "A great man is recognized only by his peers."

Achievement is its own best recognition.

Accumulation of wealth is a voice that speaks loudly in praise of successful planning and striving, and needs no other tongue to laud its possessor.

Marked discoveries in science tell a world-wide story in commendation of him who through patient toil and masterly research has reached this apex.

A hero who has proved himself equal to a great opportunity has outrun the whole chorus of acclaim proceeding from ten thousand throats and needs not a syllable of it.

But when you have eliminated from the discussion the army of those who need it not, you have still left the tremendous majority never reaching this high plane, for whom some form of recognition would be not merely a balm for wounds, but a mighty spur to activity,— and perhaps the only thing capable of lifting them towards, and even into, a position close



HP 14980

CENTRAL

upon that fair realm occupied by those who were sufficient in themselves and strong in self-reliance.

Hope stimulates to effort, and recognition awakens hope.

The joy of achievement is realized by those who have been encouraged to take all the steps leading thereto, and anything which supplies the needed push at a critical moment, or drives off the temptation to give up, must be commendable.

It is so easily furnished, and works such wonders in small doses, that we may well be astonished that so many fail utterly to try its potent spell upon those in whom they are sincerely interested.

There is nothing to which the chord of music in human nature responds so quickly and infallibly as to the touch of recognition.

In its most ordinary phase it is seen in the nod upon the street, the telegraphy of a passing glance, the indication of acquaintanceship.

Withheld, it brings a thick cloud across the sunlight.

Cordially given, it adds a turn to the

coiled spring of pleasant impulses, as denoting a kinship that lends wings to duty, and feeds the desire to be somebody and accomplish something.

Very much is said concerning the recognition of friends in heaven.

All the fondness of human affection seems to demand it, and the better land would be a misnomer without it.

The perfection of happiness seems to be bound up in a conviction that sometime, somewhere, each will know the best in all, with full appreciation, so that the impulse of complete understanding shall give joy without limit.

The suggestion, therefore, seems a reasonable one, that a portion of this ideal condition is attainable here, for we have faculties of discrimination, powers of penetration, and the art of expression, which, focussed upon any individual, would produce a most kindling result.

What is it that sends the child to his task with such unwonted energy, but a word of approbation that has been vouchsafed by some one competent to speak it,

and willing to do so,—taking notice of worthy endeavor, and real progress, and extending, in the same breath, the expectation of attainment, sure to follow upon diligence.

We are so constituted as never to outgrow this childish love of, and demand for, recognition. It seems indispensable to further effort.

The singer cannot very long pursue his art without it. The actor must have his applause, and the average mortal needs to be assured that somebody cares, else he will cease to care.

If therefore there is a desire on your part to multiply things that are laudable, and actions that are praiseworthy, learn to be generous on the side of encouragement. To depress another is easy and common,—to enhearten him is sublime.

It is written of St. Bernard, that "about this time he began to work miracles,—curing a man of a dangerous illness by a word of encouragement."

While cultivating this ability to give, it is evident that for such an individual

there is a loftier task for himself, in the direction of being able to thrive without it,—having resources that wait not upon the bidding of another's voice, and incentives to action that show no decay when appreciation is withheld.

But in this fortress height let him not look with contempt upon those who have not attained, and despise the means which they must use to help them in climbing at all.

A question often asked discloses the reason for very much of the backwardness apparent in the use of this art.

Is my recognition worth anything to anybody?

The answer should always be, "Yes." No honest greeting is ever in vain.

True it is that its value depends largely upon its source, but the smallest spring may quench the thirst of a traveller.

Increase the weight and worth of your influence to its maximum, but do not limit the sphere of its working, for there is a vast difference between power that might be used, and energy that is effectually employed.

The *Atlantic Monthly* recognized the worth of a poem by giving it a place in its pages, and the first intimation received by the author of its acceptability was in seeing it in print.

It is not too much to say that we owe the effectiveness of Celia Thaxter's writings to the spur of this first acknowledgment. Without it, concealed merits might never have been uncovered, and real worth never have reached its full development.

This art is valuable not alone for the great blessings conveyed to others by it, but for its reaction upon the one who practises it.

There is in it the root of a magnificent habit, which when it attains sufficient growth becomes a tree of beauty and strength.

Under its shelter all the virtues thrive; and by its shade the life is prevented from being parched.

The spirit of kindliness, which is one of its early seeds, and a necessity to its daily life, is a benediction that drives away many a brooding and hurtful thought.

A perpetual freshness, in the very best

sense of the word, belongs to the person who is using his skill to recognize; for avenues of observation open before him that are closed to dull eyes and heroic endeavor is manifest in quarters little suspected by the crowd.

The sadness that is in the world will not be annihilated by the man who has made this art his choice; but he will see great alleviations and discover the evidences of a massive purpose running through all its sombre problems.

He will help the wrestlers to keep at their struggle, by the belief that a stronger and better personality will thus be evoked.

He will aid the faltering will to return to its task, by pointing to the coronation that awaits its completion.

Thus believing and assisting, he will find himself reinforced in all noble determinations, so that for him the swift race becomes more possible; and the days of detention and waiting more bearable, because fuller of meaning.

In the genuine abandon of self, there is a mighty flow of returning waters that

cannot be stayed, and upon their bosom a freightage of blessing that astonishes no one so much as the individual for whose benefit it comes.

In losing himself, he has found his real self transfigured beyond calculation.

It is one of those paradoxes at which men will scoff, until by realization they learn that it is positively true.

We cannot do a purely unselfish thing without its redounding to our own enrichment.

Recognition, then, while it lives and loves to help, and succeeds in the endeavor, has a felicity for the helper.

## CHAPTER XVI

### CONSIDERATION FOR THE STRONG

"We ought to love the crippled souls with a tenderness that we have no need to waste upon noble natures."

Yes, that is true, with the exception of the single word "waste," which might better have been replaced with "bestow."

It is a glorious sight spread before us, like a heaven-tinted picture, the vast machinery of the Church and of Christendom, working for the uplifting of the fallen, the recovery of the sick, and the helping of the lame.

It makes the pulse beat quicker when the eye rests upon a hospital, where tender and untiring hands are caring for the wounded, and soothing the pain-stricken, so that we say, "Truly there is no lovelier work on earth."

It gives us a glad thought when we

read of homes for the aged and infirm, and know that a shelter has been provided for those who would otherwise be desolate.

We are enthusiastic, and rightly so, over every provision so made for the watch-care of helpless children, to focus rays of hope and happiness for those budding lives.

And as for the rescue of the fallen, and the reclaiming of the backslider, who does not thank God for every effort put forth to make the story of the Prodigal Son a poem of daily recitation?

Yes, all these things appeal to a side of our nature that has about it a reflection of the great compassion of God; and for him who would say a word against it, there could be nothing but rebukes.

Man's response to suffering allies him to the angels, and gives evidence that the brute inheritance has been overridden, and even rooted out.

God has given to us a suffering Saviour, to appeal to, awaken, and enhance this element in human nature.

But there is a word which should be

put beside this other, and that word is, consideration for the strong: a duty that rests upon us, as imposed by the same authority, and commended by the same Being, who while He counts our tears, and registers the heart-beats of pity, fails not to number our smiles, our admirations, our eulogies, and any further elements that belong to the harder problem which we are striving to solve,— How to strengthen those who stand.

Those stalwart souls standing with invincible might in the midst of tremendous forces, and braving them all; facing winds that reach the hurricane limit, and making progress in spite of them; coming up to difficulties that have upon them the menace of a Goliath, and attacking them with a courage that seems like temerity; going straight along the course of life undismayed, bearing the burdens that must be borne, doing the daily work that duty presents, cheerfully and faithfully; meeting the sorrows of life heroically, and its problems philosophically,— they do all these things, and then appear unspent, undismayed.

What nobler sight on earth than this very thing! and the sight is not an infrequent one, of human nature made strong to endure, accomplish, and defy. Is there anything that is better fitted to prove the divinity within us, or to encourage every possible outputting of hope and endeavor, than these people, who having done all are able to stand?

We do not care in what department of energy such workers may be found.

It may be that as a physician we see one such, unflagging in his round of visits, skilful in his application of remedies, and hopeful in his outlook.

Or perhaps as a musician, going through with numberless rehearsals, dealing wisely with manifold and ignorant criticism, enthusiastic in his art, which takes poetry where it can go no farther, and furnishes it with wings for a higher flight. All such are exhibitions of admirable strength and unconquerable patience.

Or observe the business man of surpassing skill and tenacity; or the woman in her household who has gained a victory

over disorder and dirt, and smiles at the ease with which it has been done; or the clergyman, hedged in by restrictions, and goaded by conflicting duties, burdened indeed with a responsibility that has in it an ocean's weight, yet confident, unhurried, always equal to his task, and you have examples of the magnificence of human strength.

Attribute it to any cause you may: say that it is the inheritance derived from a rugged ancestry, giving nerves of iron, muscles of whip-cord, and a brain as clear as a diamond; or say that it proceeds from a will-power fed by ambition, and nourished by visions of the other world brightness — explain it as you will, acknowledge its greatness you must.

Ought not the question to be asked, "How shall we strengthen those who stand? How shall we reinforce the determination, keep up the courage, renew the spirit, and conserve the forces of these men and women who have aroused our admiration?"

It may be replied: "They do not need

it; they are sufficient in themselves; they are erect through the steel-like quality of their own spines, and to talk of extending consideration or sympathy in that quarter, is as empty as the croaking of frogs."

But among the surprises of almost daily occurrence is the spectacle of a strong man falling suddenly, a bank breaking, an ocean-liner going down, a hero changed into a weakling,—and this not through the decay of years but from the absence of something that might have been supplied by a very little thought upon the part of those who supposed they had no duty toward this neighbor.

"Well," you say, "pray for them." Does not the Litany teach us to lift up our voices to the Christ of all power and sympathy and say,—"That it may please Thee to strengthen such as do stand"? He alone can keep them, and in His care they are safe.

Here we touch upon something worse than a heresy: a mistaken survey of the province of prayer. The sooner we learn

that we are to work and act in the direction that we pray, the better for our spiritual health.

When we pray, Lord, increase our faith! it is not enough to sit still and expect that lovely grace to be poured into us as through a funnel. We must set ourselves in the proper attitude; we must fight off the tempters to doubt; must strive to believe more easily and deeply; must clarify our vision of coming good, and blow upon the embers of hope, to kindle them into flame; cut off our hatreds, magnify our friendships, do all that lies in our power to widen the holy circle,—and presently we find that the prayer has been answered, God working in us to will and to do.

Exactly thus, when you pray for your friend who is strong, put forth a little personal effort in the direction of your prayer; give him a look of appreciation, and, if the law of kindness be in your tongue, a word of commendation.

Refrain from adding to his present load by making any unnecessary demands upon his time and strength. Keep back the ready criticism upon his mistakes,

remembering that we all have defects; and you will certainly find that the prayer has been effective.

The twofold objection to this suggestion will immediately appear, and would better be met at once. God can answer prayer without human help. Yes, but He does not. His method of procedure is through us. He uses human instrumentality, and hallows our poor bungling attempts to deal with heavenly things.

And as for the other exception, concerning the effeminacy of praise, and that it may be an insult to a noble mind, let it be replied, that while flattery is contemptible, honest praise is a strong and useful thing, and has the approval of the Master: "She has done what she could."

The gospel of prevention is now being sung in many lands. Even the animals are having their lives sweetened by its music, and exposure to cruelty is no longer tolerated.

All through the world of medicine runs the clear instruction of how to avoid disease and weakness.

The teachers of ethics are increasing their efforts to spread the love of goodness, and the saving health of righteousness, so that instead of working for the fallen, they spend their energies in preventing the fall. Thomas Paine said truly: "Character is much easier kept than recovered."

Beyond peradventure then, it is well to help the strong to keep strong, and if consideration will do it, let us strive for its possession in abundant measure, and deal it out with no sparing hand.

## CHAPTER XVII

### EXERCISE

THE secret of the bird's long and unwearied flight is not in the carrying power of his wings so much as in a light body, and this is the point of imitation that baffles human skill.

We can manufacture the wings, but cannot reduce sufficiently the weight to be carried.

The same element of difficulty attaches to the problems of the spiritual life, especially the maintenance of Christian joy,—there is always the burden of the flesh.

Now, there is one law about the body so plain that it becomes a sin to neglect it,—the law that associates vigor with exercise.

In the season of Lent, when we are trying to subdue the flesh to the spirit in such a way that "being ready both in body and soul, we may cheerfully accomplish

God's commands," let us see to it that we live up to this Divine law for the body.

Let us fast, if we must, from work, to get the time required ; let us summon the resolution—and much is required—to do this daily duty to ourselves.

The result will be a kindling one, no small part of our Easter joy, and a reasonable cause for satisfaction and thanksgiving ; for when we offer and present unto the Lord our souls and bodies in the Easter Communion, it will be a body strengthened, purified, vivified by obedience, in place of rebellion.

Nature's remedy for the reinvigoration of the wearied man is rest and exercise,—one not complete without the other.

It is with the second we have to do at this time.

The demands made upon the physical and nervous system in these days are tremendous and can be met only by men of exceptionable strength, or by some recuperative processes capable of restoring the vigor when it has been drawn upon, and bringing back the elasticity when it has been weakened by a long stretch.

Every part of the thinker's task draws upon his nervous energy.

There is no portion of it automatical; no moment of his time that does not call for the expenditure of thought,— quick, accurate, burdensome thought. It has taxed his resources to a degree beyond calculation, and he need not be surprised if every fibre of his body calls out for relaxation, and every delicate tissue of his nervous system clamors for repose.

In speaking of exercise as nature's remedy, it ought to be emphasized that the taking of artificial cures will result in disappointment.

Stimulants will be followed by greater lassitude; opiates will soothe at first and then craze.

Various medicines, which are generally compounded of one or the other, will disturb, and perhaps destroy, the action of the stomach and then the mainspring is broken; while exercise always helps—and harms, never.

Exercise gives tone to the whole muscular system, purifies the blood, makes the pulse stronger, clears the brain, acting

directly and immediately upon the nerves to put them into healthy condition.

So what was a mountain of difficulty a few moments before, becomes a hill easy to be climbed, and tasks that confronted us with the menace of a giant are overcome with a pebble.

It goes further, even, than this, firing the imagination, giving a new tenacity to our hold upon spiritual things, opening the eye and ear and the heart to heaven's sights and voices; and if you say that all this is a secondary effect, proceeding necessarily from the previous and changed conditions,—be it so; it is real nevertheless.

In a word then, to the one who applies rightly this remedy, there is a season of refreshing, distraction is replaced by calm, heaviness by elasticity, perplexity by clarified vision, and heart-sickness by courage new born.

Concerning the kind and amount of exercise, no laws can be laid down.

As to the first, it must be suited to the taste and natural strength of the individual, including, as it should always, the

element of pleasure ; and as to the second, the nearest we can come to a general principle is, stop a little while after bodily weariness has begun to be felt.

It is not enough that exercise should be gentle ; in most cases it should be violent, compelling the sweat of the brow, by means of which we can eat bread with relish and safety, and waking up the whole frame by motions and exertions that bring into play the entire machine.

An hour in the morning, and one, if possible, in the afternoon, with a whole day off once a month, will keep a man in prime working condition, give a joyousness to his outlook that will be contagious and effective, and set the dead-line for him some years beyond the sixty mark.

Let it be taken by wheel or on horseback, by the boat on the lake or by a run across the hills.

Let it be indoors or out-of-doors, it matters not so long as the remedy is taken, —taken as a medicine, if it must be so, but taken regularly and from a sense of

duty as keen as that which drives a man to his knees.

Two objections shall be dealt with: one, the fearful waste of time; the other, that in many cases the remedy is unnecessary.

As to the first it almost answers itself.

You can take your choice between two hours a day of prevention, and as many hours bunched up together, in the course of a year, for sickness—nature's punishment for neglect; yes, and in addition, an early and feeble old age, with the ministry changed into a being ministered unto.

As to the second,—we admit freely its force.

The writer has known a clergyman of distinction, who pursued his active labors beyond a threescore years and ten, whose only exercise was a walk to the post-office and to the homes of his people; but he had for an inheritance the sinews and lungs and bones that come from the high hills of a New England farm life. It is the exception—not the rule.

For the great majority of men, the supply of vital force is drained by each day's duties, with generally a little overdraft, and woe to that man who fails to replenish his supply.

When we use the prayer, "Stir up the wills of Thy faithful people," let us not forget to add, "and of all thy ministering servants," that in plenteously bringing forth the fruit of good works, they do not neglect that which alone can keep them in working condition—the saving health of daily exercise.

## CHAPTER XVIII

### VITAL PIETY

MOUNTAIN-TOP piety is a luxury, vital piety, a necessity.

The one is the attainment of a few, the other the effort of many.

The one uses the wings of the morning for a very high flight, and the other for scattering the radiance over a very level road. In one the wings are outspread, and in the other folded, that the knee may be bent.

This old-fashioned phrase, vital piety, is one that carries us to the very root of the personal religious life; it is the element we hope to discover in our deepest self-examination; it is the growth we seek to nourish by meditation, worship, and communion.

Do we ask what is the system of church ordinances intended to effect in us individually?

Here is the answer. Or, putting the query in another form, What proof is there that all this attendance upon Divine service, all this receiving of Christ's Body and Blood in the Holy Eucharist, all these multiplied offerings of prayer and praise and self-denial, have amounted to anything with me through this long course of years?

The proof lies in a personal possession of the soul, for which we can find no better name than "vital piety."

Is it possible to give a definition of this subtle product of devout living; to put into cold words that wonderful compound of feeling, thinking, and acting which constitutes the very centre and core of the soul?

The attempt will necessarily involve something of failure, but it may still include enough of truth to be helpful by way of suggestion.

Vital piety is that veneration for God and His ways which takes hold upon the deepest motives and purposes of the nature, and fills them through and through with obedience to the Divine will.

Something has seized upon the man's convictions, as with forceps of steel, and holds them firmly in loving faith, close to the revealed precepts and doctrines of the Almighty.

Something has taken hold of the man's emotional nature, which at times lifts him out of himself and his surroundings, and gives him thrilling thoughts and visions akin to the raptures of St. Paul.

Something has grasped the lines of the man's practical life of every day, and guides him into the ways of patience, earnestness, holiness.

The will of God has become to him the desire of the soul; the name of Christ is to him the magic word that sets the pulses of love beating, and prompts him to use all the faculties and powers of his being in the service of Him whom he has learned to call Lord.

. The fetters of the flesh are not all broken off but their thraldom has vanished; the infirmities of mortality still hinder and oppress, but with diminished force.

This man turns the pages of revelation

with an humble, thankful spirit ; they contain for him the message from on high, and whether it speaks of Calvary's Cross, or daily duties, or the joys of a better life, he listens with reverent attention.

He turns to the Church, which is for him, indeed, the "Body of Christ," and exclaims with the psalmist: "One day in Thy courts is better than a thousand!"

His heart burns within him as he joins in her holy worship ; her notes of confession, adoration, instruction, all find responsive echoes in his breast ; his soul is fed from her holy table ; all that is best and highest in his nature is stimulated and strengthened by her ministrations.

He goes forth into the world and shows by a sympathetic, cheerful work among his fellow-men that he is striving to live as a child of God, and to follow the gentle monitions of the Holy Spirit.

Now, this loving absorption of mind, body, and soul in the things of God, hallowing the character, and purifying the impulse, is the effect intended to be wrought in every individual brought under the sway of the religion of Jesus Christ.

How far we have attained unto it, or failed to reach it, should be our constant and searching inquiry.

A different view is frequently thrust upon us of the purpose of the Church's existence: we are told that it is the function of the Church to bring the nations into subjection unto Christ. We are assured that her trophies are in multiplied sanctuaries, swelling congregations, vast missionary operations, and the overthrow of unbelief.

We are bidden to rest content if we find ourselves obedient to the Church's doctrines and commands, reverent in our demeanor within her sacred places, and liberal in our offerings to her support.

All this is true; but it is included with a great deal else in the assertion that the personal result to be looked for from the means of grace is vital piety.

Statistics are misleading. Outward results do not form a safe criterion for judgment, but to look within, and find that the Church has given to me the highest motive, and helped me to apply it to all the things of this short life of mine, and

with this has pointed me, likewise, to "the hope of glory," is to give the material for such a Te Deum of praise as rarely falls from mortal lips. "Teach me Thy way, O Lord, and I will walk in Thy truth; O knit my heart unto Thee that I may fear Thy name."

## CHAPTER XIX

### THE DUTY OF JOY

Sermon preached at the Sixty-third Annual Council of the Diocese of Western New York, in Grace Church, Lockport, May 15, 1900.

"And for all there were so many, yet was not the net broken."

St. John, xxi., 11.

THE duty of joy is something that appeals to us at Eastertide. At other seasons joy presents itself as a rare privilege, a pleasant possibility, but at this time it becomes a positive duty; for we enter into the experiences of One who has overcome death and opened unto us the gate of everlasting life. We participate also in the jubilation of the disciples, and of the women, who, prostrate with the overthrow of life's best hopes, were revived with the coming back again from the dead of their Lord Himself.

If ever there rests upon us the obliga-

tion to rejoice with those that do rejoice, surely it is at the thrilling moment when we hear the first strains of "Christ our Passover is sacrified for us," and the Easter Te Deum.

Through the season of Lent we have used the Benedicite, saying, "O ye mountains and hills, bless ye the Lord, praise Him, and magnify Him forever," but the thought was saddened by the picture of the mountain of Calvary.

We sang, "O all ye green things upon the earth, bless ye the Lord, praise Him and magnify Him forever," but accompanied always with the echo:

"There is a green hill far away,
Without a city wall,
Where the dear Lord was crucified,
Who died to save us all."

At Easter we come back to the Te Deum, with its mighty joy, and say, "When Thou hadst overcome the sharpness of death, Thou didst open the Kingdom of Heaven to all believers."

Yes, joy at Easter is a duty, and one that should continue its sway during the

Pentecostal season; but why should it then cease, or slacken its hold?

Is not every Sunday marked with the resurrection light?

Does not the Gospel always carry its good tidings?

In fact, is it not right to say with the dawning of every morning, "This is the day which the Lord hath made; we will rejoice and be glad in it?"

But it is so hard in this troublesome world to keep up the enthusiasm of Christian joy,—to walk as children of light, to realize the prayer of the Master, "that your joy may be full."

Yet upon the maintenance of that one element depends very largely our usefulness in the Christian world.

If it be true, and I believe it to be, that when enthusiasm is dead life is spent, how much more is it true that when we have lost our joy in Christ accomplishment is barren.

I refer to joy not merely as an emotion, but a principle; not an expression of the face, but a chosen atmosphere for mind and heart.

If you fasten your attention upon the life of St. Peter, as depicted in the Acts and the Epistles, you will find in him a great fund of joy.

He stretches forth his hand to the lame man at the beautiful gate. He sleeps peacefully in the prison when the next day may summon him to death. He writes: "Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, which hath begotten us again unto a lively hope by the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead, wherein ye greatly rejoice." He gives us a recipe for loving life. He gives a command for those in the realm of pain and persecution: "Rejoice, inasmuch as ye are partakers of Christ's sufferings"; and offers counsel to the elders of the Church to fling all their anxieties upon God—which certainly includes their fears.

Where did St. Peter get this exuberance of abiding joy which made him such a fisher of men?

It came from the blessing of the risen Christ. It dated from one morning upon the lake of Galilee.

All was still upon the sea. No storm ruffled its surface, and the shadows of dawn had free play upon the tranquil waters.

The enchantment of peace hangs over Tiberias, and mystic fingers of joy beckon us continually to this favored spot.

Here it was our Lord spent most of His public life! Here stood Capernaum, His own city, and here mighty works proceeded from His Divine hand, "as sunbeams without effort."

Aye, more; the very breezes mingled themselves with the echoes of blessing from His holy voice.

The waves were hallowed by the touch of His feet, the very sands upon the beach seemed to whiten beneath His tread; for His spirit was imperial.

Here, also, He taught the lesson of abiding joy. He met with seven of His disciples after His resurrection, gave them a miraculous draught of fishes, and to St. Peter a special commission, after a personal interview.

We can readily understand St. Peter's desire to be alone with Christ if only for a few moments.

The last look that he had caught from Him was one of reproach after his third profane denial, a look that went to his heart and memory, opening up the fountain of his tears.

He did not stand by the cross like St. John; he went off to weep bitterly, and that was all—nay, not all; for he was at the sepulchre, and the first who went in to see where the Lord had lain.

He was with the disciples when Jesus had come in through the closed door and breathed His "Peace be unto you" upon them.

He beheld Christ again, when he opened his sacred side for St. Thomas to behold, and held up His wounded hands for a testimony unto the man's hesitating faith.

But he had never seen his Master alone, had never had the opportunity of casting himself at His feet in the bitterest humiliation and begging forgiveness with sobs and moans for his base treachery, nor heard that gentle reply of forgiveness and peace.

Here was his opportunity; Jesus was upon the shore,—only two hundred cubits

away, or perhaps four times the length of this church. The disciples were busy with their great draught of fishes; if he could reach the land he would be alone with his Lord.

With garments all dripping he hastens up the shore, and casts himself at the Saviour's feet; none of the disciples heard his agonized confession. The world has never been told what it was, how long it took, or what the words of pardon were.

But there is the picture, vivid as if it stood upon the canvas, nay, almost as striking as if we ourselves were gazing upon the tear-stained cheek of Peter and the compassionate face of Jesus.

That prostrate figure, enveloped in the rough coat, hanging limp about him, and the Divine One, with hand outstretched in absolution and blessing, remind us of two similar scenes:

One, the publican in the temple, standing afar off, who would not lift up so much as his eyes unto heaven, but smote upon his breast, saying, "God be merciful to me a sinner," while a voice is heard,

"This man went down to his house justified."

The other, the prodigal son, in ragged garments and worn-out shoes, kneeling and saying, "I have sinned against Heaven and before thee, and am no more worthy to be called thy son." But the confession is cut short with the command, "Bring forth the best robe and put it on him," —and in this case it is the robe of joy.

The rest of the disciples have now gathered. Peter cannot stay, he must do something to satisfy his emotions, and for want of anything more effectual, he goes and drags the net to land, and sits down to count the fishes.

The task which seemed too much for six sturdy disciples, is now accomplished by Peter's unaided arm,—strong in that new might of gladness which tightens every muscle and knots every sinew. He draws the net to land. He counts the fishes, and trumpets forth the greatness of the miracle from the word of Christ.

Whether it be intensity of joy or grief, one thing is necessary to quiet the

nerves, to still the conflicting emotions, to breathe peace over the perturbed spirit, and that is,— something to do. There is joy in the doing when we find that the net, supposed to be rent and ruined, is still unbroken.

I would put all the emphasis upon the unbroken net.

St. Augustine, and many after him, point out that the main lesson is upon the contrast between the two draughts of fishes,—one in the early part of Christ's public ministry, in which the net gathers fish of every kind, both good and bad, while in the last miracle of Christ the fishes are all great, and none to be cast away; marking the difference between the Church militant and the Church triumphant.

Others find a lesson upon work done beneath the surface, and done without noise.

It is common also to dwell upon the suggestion that men are to be taken in multitudes, as well as one by one.

Certainly the fact should not be passed over, that the exact number of fishes made such an impression upon the mind

of St. John that he recalled it in writing the account many years after.

But is not the supreme lesson, and the crowning surprise, found in the unbroken net?

The great struggling mass of fishes, with their sharp fins, would be sure to cut the strands, especially when left by themselves, as they were while the disciples clambered up the bank to talk with their Lord.

A broken net was of such common occurrence as to be looked upon as a matter of course, and mending nets was a constant occupation.

The damage to the net was not the only thing to be thought of, for out of a single hole might escape the whole draught of fishes, and the labor be in vain.

But when St. Peter dragged the net to land he found it unbroken.

The risen Christ strengthens the means used for His glory.

The first miracle of Christ changed water into wine, thereby signifying that everything was to be altered for the better by His coming,—water into wine, winds into praises, sobs into songs.

The last miracle of Christ, in the unbroken net, declares that by His rising again all means employed in His service are to be strengthened to fulfil their purpose.

The net is the Church,—for the Kingdom of Heaven is like unto a net cast into the sea; and the miracle is, that the net remains unbroken.

What strains of controversy have been put upon it through the ages, and keep tugging at its meshes to-day!

What shoals of fishes have been taken, and how they have struggled against it!

With what sharp edges have those within cut upon the fibres! by those without, swords and lances have been freely used; yet it remains unbroken, it carries on the same blessed work as when first cast into the sea at Pentecost.

"Though with a scornful wonder men see
her sore opprest,
By schisms rent asunder, by heresies distrest,
Yet saints their watch are keeping";

and the result is found in another hymn:

"One the strain the lips of thousands
Lift as from the heart of one,
One the conflict, one the peril, one the
march in God begun;
One the gladness of rejoicing on the far
eternal shore,
Where the one Almighty Father reigns in
love for evermore."

How can the great fact be accounted for except that the risen Lord guards the net?

Our duty then, as members of this council, is to keep the "unity of Spirit, in the bond of peace."

The net is the minister of Christ. It does no violence to the symbolism of the text to make this application—"From henceforth thou shalt be called a fisher of men." Thou shalt catch men to save them alive, and in doing this thou must employ the net, and keep it unbroken by His help.

Oh what a sad lot of fishing is done with broken nets; and how many souls have missed salvation for this one reason alone!

But on the other hand, with many—

and the marvel is that it should be true of any—the net remains unbroken.

It does its work, and does it well, clear to the end of life.

That St. Paul should be able to say, "What shall separate us from the love of Christ; shall tribulation or distress?" or to say again, "We are more than conquerors through Him who loved us," and to say it to the last, is a miracle of grace.

It was due to the fact that he was not disobedient to the heavenly vision of his risen Lord; and kept the radiance of that vision continually upon his soul.

Read the strain upon his net:

"We are troubled on every side, yet not distressed, perplexed, but not in despair, persecuted, but not forsaken, cast down, but not destroyed"; and these conditions are followed by a list of twenty-eight things, including tumults, labors, watchings, fastings, all of which are tugging at the vitality of the man. But for all there were so many, yet was not the net broken.

In reply to this, it is maintained that St.

Paul was an inspired Apostle, caught up to the third heaven in ecstasy, and mightily sustained; while we are poor, common souls with little vision, and no genius.

Yes, but we have the same Christ, and He is willing to do for us more than we ask or think.

Not only is He willing to do, but He is actually doing it for many of our acquaintance.

They are exercising the same ministry that devolves upon us, and its demands are tremendous, but for them the net is unbroken.

When the minister sits in his study, framing the sermons that are to help the children "to know these things the better," to be unto the older people of his flock a guide to the way of life and windows opening into the brighter world of God's promises, but above all to be declarations of God's revealed will unto His chosen ones, there is a stress and strain involved appreciated only by those who have put themselves to the task,—and it is a daily and constant one.

Then there are books to be studied, read, and skimmed; Church periodicals to

make oneself acquainted with; correspondence — much larger than most people suppose — to be carried on; parish records to be posted; and now and then an essay to be written.

There is pleasure in most of these, which lightens the labor but does not eliminate the strain.

After this there is the parish work, in quantity almost always beyond one's powers of accomplishment, and in kind that involves most painstaking effort, from which no one ever returns without feeling weary, dissatisfied, and wondering whether any possible good can come from the toil.

Added to this is the supervision and generally the care of seven or eight parochial organizations, which, however indispensable to the life and activity of the parish, draw heavily upon the vital force of the rector.

No mention has been made of the Sunday duties, and it will be sufficient to assert that any clergyman who takes two Sunday services, with preaching, and adds to it the superintendency of the Sunday-school, has taxed his resources to a degree

beyond his calculation. Yet with all this the text may be true.

It is said that the Brotherhood hymn, "Jesus calls us o'er the tumult of our life's wild restless sea," is very hard to translate into Chinese on account of the abundance of metaphors; this is not surprising, for it is hard to adapt the English version to the strenuous conditions of our hurried and sometimes distracted lives, and harder still to keep our working powers unimpaired for this service.

Our strength is conserved by prayer.

The net will not go to pieces if left awhile for the purpose of getting nearer to the risen Lord.

By keeping the reward in mind, "Be thou faithful,"—"Consider Him that endured, lest ye be wearied." "In due season ye shall reap, if ye faint not,"—there is the cure for weariness, and the bracer of every part of our being; to catch an occasional glimpse, by faith, of the towers of the New Jerusalem with their chiming bells.

Have a reasonable care for your bodies

if you would be "fresh in feeling, true in insight, creative in spirit, and productive in activity."

It is not necessary that your muscles should be like "bunches of steel wire"; but it will not do to ignore ordinary physical conditions if you hope to outdo, for Christ's sake, the Roman conquerors, who were said to carry in their faces the triumphs of the imperial city.

It will help also to bear in mind that nothing is expected of us beyond reasonable service, and that work is to be always measured by strength vouchsafed; "there are diversities of energies."

Keep the thought with which we started, the duty of joy; for ours is a blessed privilege, and nothing helps so much to the efficiency of the work and the lengthening of our term of available service as the preservation of our working powers at their full height,—keeping their elasticity by the joy of the Resurrection.

The risen Christ strengthens the means used for His glory, makes the body equal to the allotted tasks; enlightens the

understanding and furnishes the mental processes with abiding powers; clarifies the spirit's vision, endowing it with a persistency that defies the touch of doubt; and all this He does through the instrumentality of joy.

"I will see you again, and your heart shall rejoice, and your joy no man taketh from you."

There is the joy of forgiveness and the joy of companionship; there is the joy of effort for His sake, and sometimes the joy of accomplishment; there is the joy of adoration, and the joy of communion to make the whole life a Eucharist, which, if it be true, shall keep the net unbroken.